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The Author at the Wheel

SALT WATER TAFFY

OR, TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES AWAY FROM THE SEA

The Almost Incredible Autobiography of Capt. Ezra Triplett's Seafaring Daughter

BY

JUNE TRIPLETT

With 34 Illustrations

NEW YORK : LONDON
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
The Knickerbocker Press
1929

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6161
F6455

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F699f

SALT WATER TAFFY

Copyright, 1929
by
G. P. Putnam's Sons

First	Impression, May,	1929
Second	Impression, May,	1929
Third	Impression, May,	1929
Fourth	Impression, June,	1929
Fifth	Impression, June,	1929
Sixth	Impression, July,	1929

Made in the United States of America

DEDICATED TO

COREY FORD

WHO ENCOURAGED ME

BY WRITING THIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

FOR ME

AUG 14 '34 18110

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SALT WATER TAFFY

Chapter I

"Women Are Mostly Liars, Anyhow."—Father

SALT WATER TAFFY

Chapter I

"She's just a girl author, ma'm! Filled with the hot air of the tropics, she is, drifting day and night with the Southern skies fer a blanket, the Southern stars like asterisks overhead, and all the Seven Seas to supply her with her bunk."

It was old Britches, a member of our crew, and he was defending me to the wife of an American consul attached to one of the Virgin Islands. She had heard of my adventures along the waterfront (that is, *she* had been along the waterfront and heard of my adventures) and she knew that I had been brought up on a ship among a lot of men, without any softening feminine influence save that of a female shark. Consequently old Britches, feeling that he must uphold the dignity of his Captain's daughter, was rallying to my cause with

all the quaint sea-going dialect he could remember.

"Why, would you believe it, ma'm," he continued loyally, "before that there dainty sea-robin come aboard, there wasn't one of us sailors what really knew how to cuss. We was just about as innocent a bunch of old shell-backs as ever reefed a gaff tops'l. She learned us how to swear, ma'm. She learned us all the bad words we ever knew, bless 'er heart. She taught us to drink, too, an' play poker, an' spit. Why, ma'm, that li'l sea-nasturtium actually first started us thinking about Sex. In short, ma'm, I daresay there ain't a more hard-boiled crew afloat today than you'll find on the *Minnie I. Cohen,*" he concluded proudly, "an' it's all due to Skipper June!" And he waved his hat aloft at me, and let loose a string of picturesque oaths to prove what he said.

I was taking it easy, curled upstairs in the mizzen poop jibs'l of my father's schooner and casually wondering whether I was a boy or a girl, and what made the dew. To tell the truth, I didn't much care. I was only two or three weeks old at the time, and I could hardly have been expected to have been concerned much with the Mysteries of Life at that age. I was perfectly content just

to lie about my father's boat—a habit which has persisted in later life.

I cannot remember when I was not on a ship. (Not here, anyway.) My father was the master of the *Minnie J. Cohan,* a six-masted brigantine schooner, or sloop, which was engaged in the copra trade between the islands of the South Seas and Australia, or "Russia" as it was called in those days. Copra-trading was a rather dangerous business, for as everyone knows the copra is deadly poisonous, and one of my earliest childhood memories is of lying in my little bunk and listening to these vicious copras in the hold, hissing and lashing their forked tongues.

In exchange for these copras, we used to bring back oakum, which was shipped to the United States in large quantities to be used in the manufacture of sea-stories.

My father was the son of Henry Greenleaf Lowell and a beautiful sloe-eyed Turkish princess named Mezzanine, who met my grandfather while she was playing the Boston vaudeville circuit as a partner in a roller-skating team. Life in the conservative Nineties proved anything but pleasant with a Turkish wife (let alone life in the Nineties *without* one), and shortly before my father was

born the young couple set out for a trip around the world. In Adelaide, Australia, where they stopped for supplies, my grandfather was taken violently ill. His wife got him ashore in the nick of time. That night my father was born.

Unfortunately my grandfather, already weakened by the hard journey, died in giving birth to my father, and poor Mezzanine found herself stranded in Adelaide with an only child, little First Balcony (later my father). Beautiful women were scarce in Australia. A week after my grandfather's death she met a fascinating Turkish prince, Sonnarrevich, who was so taken with my grandmother's beauty that he asked her to elope with him on the morrow. The persuasive arguments of the charming Prince outweighed her old loves. That following morning they sailed away together, leaving my father to shift for himself.

My father shifted successively for eighteen years, from Australia to China, to South America, to San Francisco, where he married my mother, a Mrs. Ezra Triplett. Out of deference to his wife he took the name of Ezra Triplett.

When I was born they named me June, because that is the month that this autobiography is to appear.

SALT WATER TAFFY

Captain Ezra Triplett, my father, was a hard man. In his youth he had once been an old-fashioned whaling captain; and consequently, whenever I did anything of which he did not approve, he would turn me over his knee and give me an old-fashioned whaling. Sometimes when he was in a reminiscent mood he would whale me fifteen or twenty times a day. It was a hard education; but at least these successive whalings served to bring a healthy ruddy glow to my cheeks, and they kept me on my toes more or less the whole time I was at sea.

Because of its tremendous size, and the fact that three or four people can pass the night comfortably inside its stomach, most landlubbers think of the whale as being comparatively large; but Father was no one to be dominated by any fish that swims. The first whale we ever came into contact with occurred just north of Australia; and Father's action in this emergency has always convinced me that he was the greatest finny denizen of them all.

For some weeks after we had left Adelaide, bound for Scotland,[1] we had noticed a peculiar

[1] We were carrying a load of hair-brushes, a result of the old gag about the Scotchman refusing to part with his comb. This was one of Father's favorites.

bumping motion underneath the front of our boat (bow), which sometimes rocked the *Marie H. Clam* from side (port) to side (sherry) and upset the galley stove, but we had thought nothing of it at the time. Father's explanation was that perhaps our keel needed hauling.

As we progressed north into the Gulf Stream, however, the bumpiness increased; and one terrific blow shivered our timbers from stem to stern (rear), and almost set the boat on her beam-ends (i.e., sitting down). I heard the look-out in the crow's-nest give his familiar cry: "Loo-ook out!" and a moment later, sure enough, he landed upon the back of his neck upon the deck at our feet. As soon as he had caught his breath he explained excitedly: "It's either a whale, or we've struck land!"

"It couldn't be land," said the mate, biting his lip. He knew that the only land north of Australia is Spain.

"It must be a whale," said Father quietly, kicking off his shoes.

Never shall I forget the thrill which shot through me at his calm words. Although there was no sign of anything in the ocean the bumpiness continued, as though some huge monster were hump-

ing himself up and down, and our schooner tossed perilously.

In order to capture this deep-sea denizen, Father decided to use the ordinary whale tackle. (The ordinary whale tackle is made by grabbing the animal just below the dorsal fin, as in water-polo. You have to be pretty quick about it, though.) Despite his age Father rolled up his sleeves, poised for a moment upon the binnacle, stretched his arms above his head, and then dived into the center of the largest bump. There was a tremendous splash, and silence. Only his sou'wester bobbed listlessly on the surface of the sea.

Half an hour later we discovered him clinging to the anchor-chain in the wake of the schooner, dripping wet and sore as a boil; and that is why from that time to this I have never seen a fish but that I have been reminded of Father.

On the other hand, Father could be the soul of kindness to his crew; and whenever he had shattered the jawbone of a sailor with a single blow of his fist, he would always stoop down and lift the fallen offender gently to his feet before he hit him again.

Just because I was only a girl, I was soon taught

CAPTAIN EZRA TRIPLETT AND HIS DAUGHTER

What pride lights the face of this hard-bitten old mariner, caked with the brine of fifty years behind the helm, as he gazes here upon the youthful daughter at his side! With nothing but a well-thumbed Bible and a rope's end, he raised little June from a mere babe in arms to follow in the stern tradition of those who go down to the sea in ships; and today the former master of the *Kawa* may well brush a salty tear of joy from his crusted old cheeks as he exclaims with pardonable swagger: "Every inch a Triplett!"

Capt. Ezra Triplett and His Daughter

Father Tackles a Whale

FATHER TACKLES A WHALE

Filled with the excitement of the hunt, Father has just dived over the side in pursuit of an unseen finny denizen of the deep; and his excited crew have clambered into the rigging to watch the thrilling struggle. First Mate Murphy, Knut Hansom and Clarence the Cabin Boy point eagerly at the suspicious bumps in the water; Vulgar shades his eyes and anxiously scans the horizon; while trusty Swede holds his musket in readiness should the odds turn against his gallant Captain. Only June awaits the outcome with fortitude. Surely Father cannot fail!

not to expect any special privileges, except of course from literary critics. My father made me wear a sou'wester and oilskins even in clear weather—"just in case some photographers should come aboard," as he used to say—and I did my tricks with the wheel as well as the next one. (One of my favorite tricks with the wheel was to unscrew it from the hub and ride it around and around the deck like a bicycle, a stunt which never failed to convulse Father and the crew.) I manned the pumps whenever the ship sprang a leak, said "Yes, sir" to my father, held the hammer while he tacked, boxed the compass every morning for three or four rounds, kept a sharp lookout for flying-fish,[1] and was generally taught to obey just as a sailor obeys the master of a ship. Above all I was taught the code of the sea-story—never tell the truth, call it an autobiography without a smile, and poke them in the nose when they ask for proof.

There was no phase of a seaman's life that my father or the sailors didn't teach me on the *Minnie L. Crane.* I learned arithmetic by adding on my fingers, and one proud day by going barefoot I was

[1] Flying fish occur in great abundance in the South Seas, and sometimes constitute a very real danger to shipping. As a result Father always used a coarse webbing for his sails, so that the fish could fly right through without upsetting the boat.

able to count up to twenty. I never learned to write, since I did not feel that that was necessary for an autobiography like this. My reading consisted of all the volumes of the Encyclopedia except "F" to "S," which Father had thrown overboard to prevent me from filling my head with ideas about sex. The rest of our ship's library consisted of a number of modern Travel Books, such as "The Royal Road to Romance," "The Great Horn Spoon," "White Shadows in the South Seas," "Trader Horn" and "The Cradle of the Deep"; and I made up my mind then and there, after reading these autobiographies, that when I grew up I'd write a Travel Book myself every bit as spectacular as one of these.

One of the chief accomplishments of our crew was their ability to spit curves in the wind. Even the greenest cabin-boy scorned to spit on a calm day; and I have seen the more hardened mariners go around with a mouthful of tobacco-juice for weeks, waiting for a little breeze to spring up so that they could get rid of it. I would watch this feat with wide eyes and then go off in a corner and practice it myself with a hunk of Old Coffin I found under a berth, until I felt I was able to match their best efforts.

At last, after weeks of practice, the real test came. On a windy afternoon I was led up onto the main deck, before Father and the entire crew, while a representative of the Old Coffin people tied a blindfold securely around my eyes. He then placed in my mouth in succession a bath sponge, a Hershey almond bar, a common blackboard eraser, a carpet brick, and finally a fresh plug of tobacco, each wrapped in plain black paper and numbered carefully from one to five. Facing the cameras, still blindfolded, I succeeded in spitting two dandy curves into the wind, followed by a lateral pass and a figure eight, and concluded my test by spitting the initials "O. C." along the deck. The blindfold was then removed, and I signed my name to a long testimonial which the grateful tobacco people had prepared for me.

"For general spitting ability," I said, in part, "I have found that Old Coffin surpasses all other forms of chewing tobacco I have ever tried. I can not only secure greater distance and accuracy with this popular brand, but in addition I find that it develops a more graceful curve, due no doubt to its rich consistency and the juicy nature of its contents. In addition, fourteen out of fifteen men on our crew chew this same brand, and it is so

popular with these 'boys' that during a recent rescue, while rowing a leaky lifeboat in the very teeth of a howling gale, I noticed one of our seamen[1] pause to bite off a hunk of O. C. and spit three curves into the wind. . . . Whatever spitting ability I may have today, I owe to Old Coffin.—*June Triplett.*"

As a result of this test, I not only received a substantial gratuity from the Old Coffin people, but also had to clean up the deck after the demonstration was over.

Our sailors were the huskiest men that Father could assemble—Swedes, Norwegians, Germans, Irishmen and Poles. Whenever they went ashore in the waterfront saloons the native girls, thrilled by their white skin and splendid physique (as they called it) offered themselves freely; and the sailors, I noticed, were not unwilling to copy down the telephone numbers of these little brown beauties who caressed them and covered them with flowers. The fact that this question of Sex would sometime be an issue for me to face never occurred to me then. With two dozen husky men in the

[1] The seaman's name was Oscar F. Bringle, Jr. He was, unfortunately, drowned when the lifeboat tipped over during this experiment.

crew, and our boat out of sight of land for months at a time, it just didn't seem to be any problem at all.

I have often thought since of those carefree days on the *Carrie L. Maine.*

Chapter II

In Which I Learn Something About Sex.

Chapter II

"You see this here fish, June?" old Britches asked me one afternoon. "This here fish is called a sucker. It's called a sucker because it will swallow almost anything. There's hundreds of thousands of these suckers, June, and most of them read travel books."

I never forgot the lesson that he taught me.

My life at sea started at a very tender age. In fact my first impression upon opening my eyes on the world was of being dangled unceremoniously upside down by the heels, while the family doctor spanked me repeatedly with his open palm. It seemed to me even then that this spanking business was starting pretty early, and I objected in my childish treble.

"Hey, what the hell?" I piped.

"Rockaby, baby," replied the doctor kindly, seizing my ankles and slamming me against the mattress until I was red in the face.

"Listen, no damned son of a —— can get away with *that!*" I gasped, my father's blood roaring in my veins. "Rockaby, baby, eh!" and wrenching loose a slat from the cradle I swung on him with all my strength. Two hours later I reported aboard the *Ethel M. Dell* with my duffle wrapped up in a triangular piece of white linen.

I was as weak as a baby when I was born, and indeed it was several weeks at sea before I was able to hoist a sail as well as the rest of the crew. In the meantime my father turned me over to the care of old Britches. Britches was the sail-maker on our boat—that is, when the wind fell off and we were becalmed, it was old Britches that Father called on to make sail—and from the time he first took charge of me until he perished in the fatal fire that finally destroyed our boat, he devoted his life to my care. For fourteen years he taught me the mysteries of the sea; and although I abused him and pestered him and embarrassed him as only a child can, yet everything that I am today I owe to him. Poor old Britches!

I recall Britches as the only man who was older than Father. His life was just one more of those mysteries of the sea. Nobody knew where he came from—some said he was a descendant of Robert

Britches, the poet—but when he and his brother came aboard to sign on the Ship's Articles, he fiddled with the pen for a moment and then said: "Our father's name was Britches, Skipper, and if you don't mind we'll just sign on the same way."

"Just a couple of sons of Britches," answered Father, who knew a good joke when he saw one.

So the old sailor signed the Articles just "Britches,"[1] and for fifteen years he went by no other name. In appearance he was unlike any other sailor I ever saw, an effect which was partially caused by the fact that he always wore a derby hat and carried a riding-crop. To discreet inquiries as to the purpose of these articles, he would only reply: "You never can tell when you might find a horse," but it was generally believed that they referred to some romance of his buried past, and that in his youth he might have been thrown by a favorite mount. Whatever was his secret, Britches never told. He had a pleasant face surrounded by a fringe of red hair, and a wide comfortable lap, which did not disappear when he stood up, as most laps do, but merely ran around behind him and showed up under an assumed

[1] His brother left the ship immediately afterwards, having come aboard, in fact, just for the sake of the gag.

LOYAL OLD BRITCHES

Seated in the ample lap of her beloved guardian, June listens dreamily while the weatherbeaten old shellback sucks his pipe and narrates yarn after yarn of his sea-faring adventures, or ties for her amusement some of the more intricate ship's knots, of which he can average often fifteen or sixteen an hour. It was in this historic lap, her head pillowed affectionately on Britches' kindly old shoulder, that June first learned most of the maritime terms employed in this autobiography.

Loyal Old Britches

Courtesy Brown Bros.

R'f'ng the G'ff T'ps'ls

R'F'NG THE G'FF T'PS'LS

Here we see a typical deck-scene aboard the famous square-rigger *Lane Bryant,* where June spent a happy childhood roaming the South Seas. Mounted on the mizz'n jibs'l Swede keeps his trusty musket trained on the horizon, waiting for flying-fish. Vulgar with his mop is busily holystoning the m'nd'ck; Olaf Olsen climbs aloft to reef the rummage sails; in the tops'l m'n't'ch Clarence the Cabin Boy adjusts a t'ffrope spanker; while below him June and honest Hansom cling to the raffletrees and each other and discuss the mysteries of the sea. In the background the proud master, Captain Triplett, stands upon the brizzl'h'se and inspects his ship with evident satisfaction.

name. I spent many happy hours in that lap, learning some of the mysteries of the sea.

The first mystery which had to be solved was the question of feeding and clothing me during that initial trip. Fortunately the question of clothes was settled with promptness and dispatch. Britches had a pair of yellow oilskins and an old sou'wester, which he had worn, man and boy, for fifty years and by which he set great store; but when the question of clothing me arose, he did not let any sentimental attachment deter him for a moment in his decision. Without hesitation the loyal old sailor grasped his scissors and with trembling fingers cut out the seat of a pair of father's best pants. Soon I was clothed as shipshape and tidy as Britches and all the rest of the crew, except Father. For fourteen years old Britches was my guardian, nurse and severest critic, and no sacrifice was ever too great for his faithful old heart to make.

Although the question of clothing me was easily settled, the puzzle of how to feed me did not prove such an easy matter. Father's friends had warned him that he was crazy to take a baby to sea; and their dire predictions seemed about to be borne out. Even old Britches was baffled. To be sure,

he manufactured me a very handy milk-bottle out of an old gin bottle that Father had lying around in his bunk, half full; and he also designed a workable nipple out of the first mate's galoshes. But when it came to *filling* the bottle, his ingenuity gave out.

Three days out of Frisco the supply of milk which Father had put aboard for me was exhausted, and we were forced to turn back and get more. This supply in turn was exhausted three days out, and Father had to turn back once more. The third time he got as far as four days out, but inasmuch as it took him just that much longer to get back to Frisco again, it really didn't help much. After this state of affairs had continued for a month or so, Father grew pretty discouraged. It began to look as though we would never get more than three days out of Frisco until I was weaned.

"We've got to do something pretty soon," he said disconsolately to Britches. "We're way behind schedule, and our milk bill is getting something fierce."

"Can't we get milk from the ship?" suggested Britches. "A ship is she," he added philosophically.

Father shook his head.

"We could milk her rudder," urged Britches.

"How do you know?"

"I heard a farmer say so once."

"You misunderstood."

There was a long silence.

"If we had some cream," said Britches, "we could add some water, and make milk out of that."

There was another long silence. When Britches opened his eyes again, Father had left.

The following morning I was crying with hunger, and in desperation Father turned in at Norfolk Island to see if he could buy something for me to eat. He sent Britches in one direction down the island, and he went another, seeking to solve this feeding problem. His search was in vain. The native women refused to accompany him back to the ship—after all, they said, if he was so darned anxious for them he could come ashore—and after combing the island all day Father returned that night discouraged and empty-handed. Britches met him at the gangplank with a broad smile on his round face.

"Cap'n, I settled the feed problem fer the kid!"

"Where is it?" shouted Father.

With a sly grin Britches laid his finger astride his nose, tiptoed aft to the fo'c'stle, and pointed

proudly to his prize. Father peered through the shadows, and saw a terrified goat tied to one of the bunks, balancing dizzily on its legs and bleating feebly.

"Cap'n, I had a helluva time gettin' it," said Britches, "but I finally traded your compass, sextant and chronometer for this here dairy."

It was the best trade Britches ever made. Father was so grateful for the goat that he gave Britches the special privilege of cleaning up after it, as long as it stayed on the ship. The happy sailors named the goat "Sweetheart," and it soon became the pet of the fo'c'stle.

Unfortunately I was not destined to have my bottle of milk that night, nor for many nights to come. The moment we put to sea "Sweetheart" became violently seasick, and meantime I grew hungrier and hungrier. Father knew that seasickness, like a broken leg, was purely mental; but unfortunately neither the goat nor I fully appreciated this advice. For weeks it lay in its bunk in the fo'c'stle, moaning and groaning and hoping to itself that the boat would sink; and for weeks I lay in *my* bunk, starving to death. The crew tended the goat day and night, bringing it appetizing tidbits and magazines to read; but despite their ef-

forts "Sweetheart" steadily refused to give milk. After a month had passed, Father's suspicions began to be aroused. He decided to go aft to investigate.

That night he approached my bunk with a steaming platter of goat-meat.

"I'm afraid there's no use waiting any longer for that milk," he said sadly.

"Why not?" I demanded in surprise.

" 'Sweetheart' will never give milk, June, little girl."

"What's the big idea?"

By way of answer Father sat down quietly on the bunk beside me; and while I devoured my first square meal he opened his worn old Bible and turned its pages till he found a certain chapter in the Old Testament called the "Songs of Solomon." And then in a gentle voice, while the ship creaked and the waves hissed under our bow, he read to me the explanation of the question that I had asked.

That was the first time I ever realized there was such a thing as Sex.

Chapter III

A Female Shark, and What Went on Inside

Chapter III

All this time I was naturally getting older, and naturally I was becoming more and more concerned daily with the Facts of Existence. My experience with Sweetheart, the goat, had awakened my curiosity in these matters, and I felt it was high time that I found out whether I was a boy or a girl, for example, if only to save embarrassment in railroad stations.

Whenever I approached the crew on this question, however, they merely countered with some clumsy explanation in typical sea-going fashion. The sailors, in fact, proved to be men of action and not words, and their conscientious efforts to make things clearer for me only succeeded in pointing the whole problem more acutely than ever in my mind. Father always answered my questions by reading some more from his well-thumbed Bible, or turning me over his knee and paddling

my stern. As a matter of fact, all these successive paddlings on my stern only aroused my interest in the subject even further; and if it had not been for an incident which occurred while the *Edith M. Wharton* was cruising north of Australia, this curiosity might have known no bounds.

On the morning of which I am speaking Father was sitting on the taffrail, rifle in hand, waiting for the clouds to clear away so that he could "shoot the sun," or find by navigation our exact position. Either we were just west of Labrador, or else in Lake Winnepesaukee, and Father wanted to know which.

"Say, June," he called suddenly, "come here and take a look at this fish."

I dropped the anchor-chain I was knitting and ran to the poop-after-main-h'tch. Looking over the stern I saw a greenish white shadow deep in the water. Slowly the shadow approached the surface, and a three-cornered fin stuck out of the water like a tiny sail. It swam around in circles, following our wake and licking its chops hungrily.

"What is it?" I asked curiously.

"It's a man-eating shark," said Father; and to prove it he seized a nearby sailor and dropped him overboard. There was a swirl in the water, and

presently the fish came to the surface again, licking his chops.

"Another," I cried, clapping my little hands; so Father threw over another sailor, with like results.

"I don't believe that a man-eating shark really kills people," I persisted, staring unconvinced at the mouth from which a single sea-boot still protruded, kicking feebly as it disappeared. "I think that is all superstition and tall talk. You hear of people who have been eaten by sharks," I pointed out judicially, "but did you ever actually *meet* anybody who had been eaten by a shark?"[1]

"I bet they're man-eaters, just the same," pouted Father. "Let's pull it aboard and find out."

I loaded his rifle eagerly, and in the meantime Father seized another sailor and baited a large iron hook. While I stood poised at the rail he lowered the hook and bait down into the water. Led by its vari-colored pilot-fish, the *Macom,* the shark approached the tempting morsel, then circled away suspiciously. A second time it approached, and after pushing at it with its snout, it suddenly turned belly-up and grabbed at the man, who im-

[1] There was a reward offered in Key West, Florida, for five years for anybody who could prove he had been eaten by a shark. It went unclaimed.

mediately disappeared up to his waist down the cavernous maw. At the signal from Father I fired the rifle.

"Hey!" cried the sailor irritably.

"Sorry," I said, and fired again. This time I hit the shark, which leapt clear out of water, quivering from head to tail, and commenced to thrash feebly. The surrounding water took on a deep red color. Again and again I fired into its struggling body, while Father and the rest of the crew hauled desperately at the rope. After a terrific struggle the beast rose slowly to the rail, and by running a bow-line around its tail the men managed to haul it onto the deck. While I emptied my rifle into it, Father ran a scantline down its throat, McLean hacked off its head, and Britches chopped its tail off, splintering its spine. A shark is very hard to kill, and we wanted to be sure it wasn't foxing us.

When we had convinced ourselves that it was dead, Britches sharpened his knife on a marlinspike and prepared to dissect it. It was the first time I had ever seen the insides of a man-eating shark, and I watched in fascination as he went through the yards and yards of guts. It took him about three hours to make the round trip and come

out where he started from; and all he found for his pains was a rusty piece of tin, a copy of the New York Times Book Review Section for August 8, 1903, and the three sailors, who emerged mopping their foreheads and declaring they wouldn't go through such an experience again for a million dollars.

"Oh, a shark's a man-eater, all right," said one sailor. "Phew!"

"If anybody says that a shark doesn't eat a man, you refer him to me," said another.

No portion of that shark, it appeared, was to be wasted. While Father cut out the backbone to use as a cane for spanking me in case I asked any questions—the first question I asked him was why he cut the backbone out, so that is how I know—McLean removed the empty gut and stretched it in the sun to dry. "For blow-out patches," he explained. Then Britches took his knife and commenced to remove the huge iron-like jaw-bones. As he rubbed his fingers accidentally along the edge of the gaping mouth, he let forth a sudden "Cripes!"

"What's the matter, Britches?"

"Lipstick," he replied crestfallen, showing me the tips of his fingers, which I noticed were now a

"I LEARNED ABOUT WOMEN FROM HER"

This vicious female shark, its gaping maw still hideous in death, has just been hauled over the side of the boat by the eager crew; and June stands beside it on the bloodstained deck, her eyes dancing with anticipation. Who knows what mysteries of life will be unraveled when faithful Britches cuts it open and lays bare the secrets that are contained within?

Courtesy Brown Bros.

"I Learned About Women From Her"

Courtesy French Line

Seduction Ad Absurdum

SEDUCTION AD ADSURDUM

On the deserted after-deck of her father's schooner the innocent June has just been attacked by the ship's bully Olaf ("Horrible") Olsen. As he seizes her slender arms in his hairy fists, the lust glowing in his baleful eyes and his hot breath coming and going, she backs away in terror toward the rail. Better death than dishonor!

bright red. "This here is a female shark. I thought as much when I seen she was wearing corsets."

"Open her up," I demanded eagerly. "I want to find out a couple of interesting things."

Slowly Britches slit up the upper stomach of the mutilated shark. I bent over him eagerly as he reached his hand and wrist into the opening, and looked where he pointed. There in the stomach of the mother shark was a pouch; and there in the pouch was a copy of "What Every Young Girl Should Know."[1]

Unfortunately my joy at this discovery was short-lived. As I took the book in my arms and carried it to the brizzlem'st, where I prepared to devour it from cover to cover, Father happened to spy the title. With an oath he seized it from me, gave me a whipping on my stern-sheets with the backbone of the shark, and sent me to bed without my supper. As far as I was concerned, that night, life was just as much a mystery as ever.

On the other hand, I noticed a light burning in Father's cabin until the wee hours of the morning.

[1] It has since been claimed by scientists that sharks are not mammals, and therefore it would be impossible to find a copy of "What Every Young Girl Should Know" inside. My answer to this is: "I suppose the New York Public Library isn't a mammal, either!"

On another occasion a fish was similarly responsible for teaching me some more of the mysteries of life; but this time I have always thought that I fared a little better. I had been dangling a hook over the side, amusing myself idly one afternoon while Father and the crew were ashore at Sydney, and by dusk I had a fairly good catch, including two or three mackerel, a couple of snappers, and a shiner that Father had given me earlier in the afternoon. I dropped my hook into the water for one final try, when a sudden jerk on the line knocked me off my feet and dragged me perilously near the rail.

"Help!" I shouted in a childish treble.

Ole Olsen, a deck-hand who was by nature something of a bully, looked up at me in surprise. We two were alone on the deck.

"Help!" I repeated in terror, clutching at the rail.

A wicked leer spread over his face, and his eyes narrowed with fell purpose.

"Give me a hand," I panted. "This damn fish is dragging me overboard."

"If I give you a hand," he leered, "will you give me a kiss?"

I shook my head.

"Two kisses?" offered Olsen.

The rail began to bend ominously.

"Three kisses?"

At that moment the rail gave way with a splintering crash, and I plunged downward helplessly into the black waters of the harbor. I emerged choking and beating the water desperately with my tiny hands. Far above me Olsen still leaned his elbows on the rail and watched my efforts.

"Three kisses," he offered, shifting his elbows slightly and removing his pipe, "and a box of candy."

"Well," I hesitated, as I prepared to go down for the third time.

"Nice candy," he urged, "with almonds in it."

"I don't like candy," I said slowly. "Besides, my father said not to take candy from strangers."

"Aw, come on back up on deck," he teased. "What are you doing right now?"

"I was just going down for the third time," I replied dubiously.

"Pooh for the third time!" scoffed Olsen. "Two times is plenty for a little girl like you. I think you did very well to sink even *two* times. I couldn't sink half as well at your age. Well, what do you say?"

"I don't know," I hesitated.

"I'll bet you don't *want* to come up," accused Olsen bitterly. "I'll bet you'd rather stay down there and drown rather than come back up on deck with me."

"Oh, no," I assured him, "Honest I wouldn't, Ole. It isn't that."

"Yes, it is," Olsen insisted. "I can tell. I've got my feelings. I can sense when I'm not wanted." His voice broke. "Oh, go ahead and sink, for all I care."

"Olsen, please don't talk that way," I said, as I clambered rapidly up the side of the ship. "You know you mustn't talk like that. It's wicked." I pulled myself dripping over the rail, and hurried across the deck to the huddled figure on the hatch-cover. "I'm sorry, Ole," I urged softly, putting my arms around his neck. "You see, I was down there, and I'd already gone down a couple of times, and I—well, I guess I just didn't think, that was all. Come on, buck up, be a man."

"That's just the trouble," sobbed Olsen through his fingers. "I'm not a man. I'm just a mere nobody. I can't even seduce a little girl."

"Yes, you can, too," I insisted, lifting his limp

hand and placing it upon my shoulder. "Look, you're seducing me fine."

"No, I can't," moaned Olsen. "The girls always make fun of me. 'Horrible Olsen!' they say. 'Oh, yeah?' and they dance around and around me, and trip me, and untie my necktie, and shove me here and there, and knock off my hat. I have no power over them. I make my eyes like little slits, and my chest goes up and down, but it doesn't terrify them one little bit. I'm not even a social menace."

"You are too a menace," I insisted indignantly, snuggling my head in his lap. "You're a terrible menace to little girls, and I'm scared to death of you."

"Are you really?" smiled Olsen through his tears.

"You just bet I am," I assured him. "Why, when you take hold of my arm like this," and I placed his hand carefully on my wrist, "the shivers just run up and down my spine."

"Does it scare you when I go like this?" asked Olsen, wriggling his fingers in front of my face and breathing hard.

"It certainly does," I shivered. "You're like a fiend."

"It's one of my best," admitted Olsen. "I prac-

tice it at night in front of a mirror. How about this one?" and he rumpled his hair, and twisted his face into a hideous smile.

"Why, you could scare *any* girl with that!" I nodded enthusiastically. "That's a peach, Ole. Now place your great hairy paw behind my neck and crush my innocent face against yours."

"Gee, I don't know," giggled Olsen sheepishly. "Is it all right?"

"Sure it's all right," I assured him. "It's the only way to do it. Crush my mouth to yours and press burning kisses upon my lips."

"Like this?" asked Olsen in some embarrassment.

At that moment I heard a snort of rage behind us, and the next moment two great hands had torn us apart, and Father was glaring at Olsen, breathing fire and so choked with rage that he could scarcely speak.

"You . . . you hound," cried Father, dangling the luckless sailor aloft by the collar. "You cad! You fellow! You seducer of little girls . . ."

With a whirring noise his mighty fist shot through the air like a meteor. I heard a sickening crunch, as Olsen's feet shot into the air, and he catapulted the length of the deck and brought up

against the mizzen mast with a thud. Terrorized I ran and bent over his prostrate form. He opened his eyes slowly.

"Did you hear what he called me?" he breathed, his battered mouth spreading in a beatific smile. "Did you hear it? *A seducer of little girls . . .*"

The memory of that smile still lingered as I lay across Father's knee, and he spanked me with the end of a long leather strap; and I felt that any punishment was worth the pleasure of witnessing poor Olsen's happiness at being a real social menace, after all.

Chapter IV

"Waterspouts to L'rrrrr'w'd!"

Chapter IV

Although I was happy and contented on the *Mabel W. Willebrandt,* nevertheless I often missed the companionship of children my own age. The sailors were always ready to play childish games with me, such as "Post Office" and "Who Pinched Hettie?", but there were times when even this did not satisfy my longing for companionship. I wanted to watch somebody *else* get spanked for a change.

My father seemed to sense this lack; and in order to atone for it he permitted me to keep a number of pets on board, which I took to bed with me every night. My collection included several sea-serpents, a narwhal, and seven Norwegian sailors that I found once drifting in a lifeboat; but the only pet I ever really cared for was a small waterspout named Gladys.

I shall never forget the day that Gladys arrived. That hot afternoon I had been stationed on the

taffrail scupper to keep a sharp lookout for ice-bergs (we were just crossing the Equator, and the ice-bergs were getting something fierce) when I heard the look-out in the crow's-nest give his familiar cry of warning: "Looo-oook out!" and a moment later, as was his custom, he landed on the back of his neck upon the deck. He scrambled to his feet, and saluted.

"What is it?" demanded Father.

"I don't know," he replied sheepishly. "I just had a hunch." Sailors are very superstitious, and often believe in premonitions of disaster. This time his hunch was soon justified; for no sooner had he climbed back to the crow's-nest than I heard his cry again: "Looo-ook out!" and this time he landed square on the top of his head.

"Starboard beam port bow aft!" he pointed, staggering to his feet.

I saw Father take one look, and his face blanched.

"Strum the m'n'tch!" His voice shook the air. "Avast with the poop, and trim the tr'b'lt's!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" everybody replied, having no idea what he meant.

"Tr'f'g in the blizzzz'm'brghtwch!" bellowed Father.

"Why, surely, sir," replied the embarrassed sailors, running in all directions, some hoisting the sails, others reefing them, others lowering the anchor or nervously shifting the cargo, while two or three sailors in their confusion manned a lifeboat and rowed rapidly away to the east.

"Luff up a bit!" roared Father to me; so I put my arms round a nearby sailor and luffed up a bit. Obedience is the first law of the sea.

The wind meantime had commenced to hum with a vicious steadiness from starboard, and the sky was rapidly darkened with racing clouds. The sea itself had become an ominous black. Over the roar of the wind and the excited whispers of the puzzled sailors, Father shouted: "Waterspouts to l'rrrrrrr'w'd!"

I looked where he pointed. As I watched, the clouds and the sea seemed for a moment to meet; and then for the first time I made out a group of objects like huge hour-glasses wandering toward us across the horizon, swaying and writhing and uttering a weird wailing sound that grew louder as they approached. At a glance there seemed to be forty of these strange creatures, their heads lost in the pitching sky, gradually drawing nearer. Father's face went white. Our boat was drifting

LYING ALOFT

Seated on the jibs'l boom of the taffrail scupper, Clarence the Cabin Boy, June, and Knut Hansom are keeping a sharp look-out for the dangerous icebergs which roam the Equator in vast flocks. The icebergs constitute a constant menace to ships in these regions (it isn't so much the *ice*, of course, as the fact that they are infested with polar bears); and it is only by the undivided attention of the crew, whose eyes never leave the horizon for an instant, that a ship may pass unscathed.

Lying Aloft

"Waterspouts Ahoy!"

"WATERSPOUTS AHOY!"

Who that has sailed the sea has not heard this fateful cry? Whose heart has not been struck numb by the sight, far off on the horizon, of a herd of stampeding waterspouts approaching over the water with incredible swiftness? Clustered on the aft'm'st wimpers the terrified crew point to the impending disaster that is overwhelming them with pitiless haste. Can nothing save them?

slowly but surely into their course, and we seemed powerless to avoid disaster.

"Throw over the anchor!" shouted Father.

"I *did* throw over the anchor," replied the mate irritably.

"Then why is the boat drifting?"

"There wasn't any rope on the anchor," sighed the mate. "If I've told that second mate once, I've told him a dozen times . . ."

"Sheet in your jibs!" roared Father. The mate started to reply something, but evidently changed his mind.

"What's happened?" I yelled to him.

"This damned wind is taking us right toward them," he answered. "They'll get our scent any minute."

Even as he spoke I saw the head waterspout halt and sway suspiciously, bending this way and that like a coiled snake. A moment later it broke into a curious humming noise and started toward us at incredible speed. The entire herd followed in its wake. As the stampede drew nearer their pace increased until they seemed to be travelling with the wind, swelling and reaching toward us eagerly. Down on the deck the men sweated and heaved at the ropes, some raising the sails, others

lowering them again, others mopping the decks or running up a series of ship's flags. Still the *Mary L. Guinan* sped forward.

Now I have heard grave scientists explain that a waterspout is nothing but a wet cyclone, and that if it were put in an arid section of land, such as Kansas, it would turn into a mere revolving gust of wind, and probably be elected to the United States Senate. And a fat lot of good that did us right now, with Kansas three thousand miles away and our boat drifting powerless into the very maw of the leading monster. There is nothing more irritating than a scientific paragraph in the midst of a very exciting bit of description, and Father knew it. His lips were pressed together in grim determination, and he never took his eyes once from the approaching waterspout.

"We haven't got a chance!" I heard him mutter.

The leading waterspout was almost upon us, and I could see its hungry maw dripping with anticipation.

Suddenly Father shouted: "June! My rifle!" I found his faithful 22, with which he was wont so often to shoot the sun, and handed it to him with trembling fingers. It was our last chance. The

crew and I all held our ears, and shut our eyes as he raised it to his shoulder.

Crack! With uncanny aim Father sent a single bullet through the middle of the enemy!

For a moment the waterspout halted dead in its tracks, swaying backward; then slowly it tilted forward, and collapsed with a horrible roar. Hundreds of tons of water, fish, seaweed, and a couple of tourists from a nearby steamer descended on our decks, as the stricken waterspout thrashed once or twice feebly, muttered something about taking a letter to "Jo," twitched convulsively, and disappeared into the sea.

The rest of the herd of waterspouts had halted, evidently nonplussed by this sudden accident to their leader. Now they turned, panic-stricken at the white man's magic, and scattered pell-mell toward the horizon with their tails between their legs. They were gone in an instant, the wind fell, the sun came out, and the two tourists, who were both from Montclair, N. J., walked over and introduced themselves to Father.

While the rest of the crew was sweeping up the dead fish, however, I continued to stare at the sea before us. A small wriggling motion had caught my eye. It seemed to rise and fall, moving away

from us with uncertain steps in the general direction taken by the vanished herd, and now and again bleating piteously.

"Stop the ship," I called to Britches. "I think that's a baby waterspout."

Without a thought of danger I jumped overboard, and struck out after my prize. While the crew gathered along the taffrail to watch my chase, I plunged on after the baby spout. I would no sooner swim within easy reach of it, however, than it would flop just out of my grasp. With several swift strokes I overtook it again, but this time it dodged and floundered to the right, whimpering piteously and wriggling in its effort to escape. I overtook it once more. Cornered, it turned upon me and hummed in frantic terror.

I was nonplussed as to the proper way to tame this wild creature, but a sudden idea struck me. I had noticed that the baby spout bore a slight resemblance to a cut-glass vase, similar to the cut-glass vases found in taxi-cabs. I slyly plucked a nearby sea-nasturtium, and reaching up in the air I thrust this flower down the roof of the little waterspout. My ruse broke its spirit. Slowly I saw its face twist into a grudging smile, and then as the full flavor of this absurd idea struck home,

FATHER TO THE RESCUE!

Once again the dauntless courage of Captain Ezra Triplett saves the day! Just as all hope has been abandoned he seizes his faithful 22 rifle, and, while June steadies it on the rail, with unerring aim he sends a bullet straight through the heart of the approaching demon of the sea. In the background a terrified waterspout, aghast at this sudden turn of affairs, has just taken to its heels and is reeling frantically back toward the horizon again.

Father to the Rescue!

Courtesy Brown Bros.

The Capture of Little Gladys

THE CAPTURE OF LITTLE GLADYS

Now we see the brave crew putting to sea, from their badly battered ship, after a baby waterspout which has just been abandoned by the fleeing herd. While they rest their oars and paddle up silently onto the whimpering little creature, June levels her harpoon in case the terrified spout should turn on them like a beast in a trap. Fortunately the capture was effected without watershed.

it broke into a laugh at the ridiculous picture it presented. In this helpless condition I led it back to the ship with ease, and hoisted it aboard in a bucket.

After a brief consideration Father allowed me to keep Gladys (as I named her) for my own pet, on condition that I promised not to take her to bed with me. (My bunk was just over Father's.) I kept her in the bucket, feeding her daily on a hundred gallons of sea-water; and in the course of time she became thoroughly tame and would spin contentedly in her bucket for hours at a time. She grew very attached to me, and finally lost her life many years later in a loyal attempt to extinguish the fire that finally destroyed the *Anna M. Wong*.

When Gladys had become thoroughly housebroken—if indeed you can speak of a boat as a "house"—she was allowed the run of the ship, and in the course of time she became a popular favorite with the crew. During hot days in the tropics she would obligingly hang upside down by her heels from the ceiling of the fo'c'stle, while the grateful crew enjoyed a cool shower beneath her. Gladys was as full of fun as "the old nick," and her favorite prank of hiding in one of the sailor's coffee-cups and suddenly springing to her full height just as

he raised it to his lips never failed to bring a laugh.

Gladys had only one fault. She loved to drink.

One night in Adelaide we two had stopped in at Charlie's for a couple of quick ones, and as usual Gladys had been the sensation of the bar. Gladys' method of drinking was, to say the least, unique. Owing to the peculiar construction of a waterspout, she could not toss down a drink like the rest did, but instead had to sit on the rim of the glass and suck up the drink as if she were a straw. This feat never failed to delight the onlookers, and they would buy as many drinks for her as she would swallow, if you could call it swallow. In the course of a night this ran up into drinks, for Gladys' capacity was well over a hundred gallons.

Inasmuch as Gladys and I were together, the crowd at the bar would set out another drink for me whenever they ordered a new one for Gladys; and soon I felt my own head spinning. The more I drank, the faster I seemed to spin. My first indication that anything was the matter was when I noticed Gladys had practically stopped whirling.

"Why are you standing still?" I asked her in surprise.

"I'm not standing still," said Gladys. "I'm whirling as fast as ever. You're just going past

me so fast that it *seems* as if I were standing still."

I took another drink.

"You *are* standing still," I told Gladys. "In fact, you're going backwards."

"Maybe you better get her back to the ship," one of the sailors whispered to Gladys.

I have no idea how we managed to get back to the ship. My first impression was of following Gladys giddily up the gangplank and coming face to face at the top with something very large and very unpleasant, which was breathing fire and smoke and a series of picturesque oaths. A second glance showed that it was Father.

"Look, I'm a waterspout," I smiled nervously, revolving once or twice to show him what I meant.

For a moment he stared at me, spinning uneasily before him; then in grim silence he seized a length of thick rope and advanced toward me with a terrible frown. I felt that I was in for some rough weather astern. It was Gladys' presence of mind that saved us both. So furious was Father that he did not see her step quickly in front of me; and in his blind rage he seized Gladys by mistake. As he turned her over his knee, his expression suddenly froze, and slowly changed to one of bewilderment. He shifted slightly, then abruptly rose with

an embarrassed giggle, dumping the loyal waterspout unceremoniously upon the deck, and hobbled down below to his cabin.

By the time he emerged again in a dry pair of trousers, I was safely hidden in the jizzm'nfch grig where no one could find me.

Chapter V

A Bucko Captain Teaches Me How to Swim

Chapter V

As I grew up, strong and healthy, I had three very simple ambitions in life: to be able to hand reef and steer; to throw the bulwark as far as any other travel-writer could; and to go to sea myself sometime.

In the meantime my education was not being neglected. My father had spent hours on end, trying to teach me to say "goddamned wind"; but in my childish way I would always get the words confused, saying "doggamned wind" or "woddamned gind" or "lousy bastard of a wind." Nor was this the only phase of my education that Father tried to improve. One of the first things that Father and Britches had decided was that it was highly necessary for me to learn to swim.

"There's no doubt that swimming is the best method of keeping afloat in water," said Father, "unless one is in, for example, a boat."

"But I don't know how to swim myself," said Britches sadly.

"You leave her to me," replied Father. "I'll teach her."

For my first lesson Father led me up to the poop deck, where Britches had rigged up a canvas tank aft the tops'l gig.[1] All morning long the sailors had bailed up buckets of sea-water by hand until several hundred gallons were in the tank. When all was in readiness, Father rolled me around the deck a little, boxed with me a couple of rounds to warm me up, and then ordered me to strip.

Father was strongly opposed to the false modesty which is found in the prescribed women's bathing suits, and he had taught me early in life to discard these silly conventions, and allow the untrammeled freedom of my limbs. A healthy girl, he often said, need never be ashamed of the body God gave her. Consequently the sensible yet withal conservative costume which I always wore when swimming consisted simply of the usual "heavies" or balbriggans, two pairs of long woolen tights, black stockings (for sharks), sandals, a large ruffed skirt, and an

[1] In general this tank was smaller than, for example, the Hotel Roosevelt Pool; but it was the best we could do under the circumstances.

abbreviated oversuit terminating abruptly at either elbow and just above the ankles. If we were near a dock or another boat, of course, I also wore a modest chinchilla ulster.

Clad in this workaday swimming suit, I prepared to master the art of natation, as the sailors call it. Before I did anything else, Father resolved first to overcome my fear of the water. This he did by leading me gently to the canvas tank and slowly dipping each hand in succession into the contents of the tub, as far as the wrist. Having overcome my timidity in this manner, the crew was told to empty the tub again, while Father laid me on my back upon the deck and explained to me the art of floating.

"In the first place," he explained, "a girl always learns to float easier than a boy."

"Why is that?" I asked.

"The female form is more buoyant than the male, for several reasons," said Father, "all of which become apparent when you are floating in the water."

After I had lain on the deck for an hour or two, Father was convinced I knew the principle of floating; and as the next step in my instruction he took me up to the crow's-nest and showed me how to dive. The best dive is made by placing the hands above

the head with the palms together, ducking the knees once or twice, stretching on tiptoes, and suddenly springing out into space. After I had practiced this several times I got the knack of it pretty well, all except the landing. Father explained that this would be easier when I tried it on water instead of the deck.

"And now, June," said Father, "I'm going to show you a couple of good strokes."

He then took a long leather strap and fastened one end around the middle of my body, hauling me up into the air until only my arms and legs touched the deck. In this position he led me up and down the ship like a dog on a leash, explaining the crawl and overhand and breast-stroke, and employing the slack end of the strap whenever I slowed my pace.

"Come on, tread water!" he shouted, laying the end of the strap suddenly across my stern. "Keep your head up!" and he swung the strap again amid the laughter of the crew.

I quickened my pace under this impetus and scrambled desperately along the deck.

"Kick out your legs," grinned Father, hoisting me higher with the harness until only my toes and fingertips brushed the deck, and swinging the loose

end of the strap faster and faster. "Don't get rattled!" Whack! "Breathe out through your nose!" Whack! whack! "*Keep your mouth shut!*" Whack whack! whack!

"Let me up," I pleaded. "I can swim."

"We'll see," said Father. "Now I'll just throw you overboard, and find out how much all these lessons have helped you. Don't be afraid, because Papa will be swimming right beside you."

We poised side by side on the rail until Father counted three.

"Jump!" he said; and we jumped.

There was a resounding splash, and I thought I had sunk to the bottom of the world and would never come up. I finally rose spluttering, shook the water from my eyes, and started back toward the ship. At first I had some trouble timing my strokes in unison, but I soon found myself progressing easily, proud in the knowledge that I was a swimmer at last. A faint cry in my wake halted me as I neared the ship.

"June," called Father weakly. "Come help Papa."

"Why don't you swim?" I shouted. "Sure, just swim that's all. Swim like I do."

AN OLD WHALING CAPTAIN

"Spare the belaying pin and spoil the child," mutters Captain Triplett, who is shown teaching his daughter some more about that stern tradition of the sea. Whenever little June does anything that offends him, he invariably turns her over his knee and whales her with a rope's end, the butt of a rifle, a loose lifeboat, or anything else that lies handy. Poor Vulgar is horrified at the apparent cruelty of this punishment; but philosophical old Britches, who views the whole thing from another angle, realizes that this hard education will give her something durable and tough to fall back on in later years.

JUNE LEARNS TO KEEP AFLOAT IN WATER

Here we see June Triplett engaged in her first swimming lesson. Captain Triplett believes that the best way to overcome a natural timidity of the water is to take the pupil unawares; and consequently, without a word of warning, he has suddenly sunk the ship in mid-ocean. As a result June finds herself in the water, and has no choice but to swim. Neither has the crew.

"Aw, come on back, there's a nice girl," pleaded Father.

"Tread water," I laughed, swimming around and around him as he floundered helplessly. "Keep your head up! Kick out your legs!"

"Aw, hey, June," he panted.

"Don't get rattled," I shouted, splashing water in his face. "Breathe out through your nose! Keep your mouth shut! Boy, oh, boy!" and I grabbed his legs and ducked him beneath the surface.

"Help," pleaded Father, swallowing a mouthful of salt water.

"No more lickings?" I demanded.

"No more . . . lickings . . ." agreed Father faintly; and so after I had ducked him two or three times more I finally slung him across my shoulder and swam back with him to the ship. By rolling him on a barrel half an hour, he came around all right; and his first act upon opening his eyes was to seize the leather strap and haul me across his knee.

"I thought I heard you say you wouldn't lick me," I reminded him.

"Well, this will—teach you—not to believe—everything you hear," said Father, his arm rising and falling rhythmically; and this simple lesson

has proved invaluable to me later in reading some of the current stories of the sea.

It must not be thought from these successive spankings that Father was cruel or hard—indeed, if anyone was growing callous, I was myself—but he had been trained in the stern tradition of the sea, and he was accustomed to rule his men with a hand of iron. With characteristic clear vision he kept a strong grasp on the helm of my ship of life, and guided me through the shoals of inexperience into the full flower of maturity. Whenever any problem became too involved for his simple explanation, he would fall back on his well-thumbed Bible; and he became so proficient in time that he could thumb this Bible with one hand while spanking me with the other.

I often wondered, as I lay across his knee, what lay behind the look of smouldering hate that sometimes burned deep in his eyes; and occasionally while he was spanking me in the twilight I would ask him to tell me the story of his youth. Father would sigh bitterly and shake his head.

"I kind of hate to even think back on it, June," he would say, pausing dreamily for a moment with the rope's end upraised. "This tale of mine is a very sore point with me."

"I know, Father," I would reply sympathetically. "So is mine."

Then, with a break in his voice, amid the quiet drone of the wind in the rigging and the rhythmic fall of the rope's end across my rear, he would relate to me the hitherto unknown history of the loss of his first command, the ill-fated *Kawa*. Father made me promise that I would never repeat it to a living soul; and so I am giving it here in all its details.

Chapter VI

The Sinking of the Kawa

Chapter VI

San Francisco in 1839! A tangled mass of shipping in the harbor, tugs, ferries, and scurrying yachts, here and there a canoe filled with Indians trading wampum; before the log cabins on the hill a platoon of soldiers already drilling for the Civil War; and tied up to the quaint pier, her blue flag flying and her crew of hardy adventurers staring all unknowing for the last time at this scene of bustling activity, the ill-fated *Kawa* stood ready to embark upon what was to prove her final voyage.

Whistles were blowing, sirens shrieking, somewhere a steward's gong rang faintly and a bugle sounded its warning note. The crowd of friends on the dock waved their hats aloft in tearful farewell to the intrepid explorers, bound for none knew how long, alas! amongst the savage cannibals of the South Seas. "So long, Swank!" they called. "A good trip to you, Whinney!" and "Farewell,

Dr. Walter H. Traprock! Farewell to you!" came from the choking throats of the weeping relatives on the pier. My father stood beside the taffrail, staring at his watch. At precisely three minutes to three, always an ominous moment in the lives of sailor-folk, he nodded his head gravely, and the excited crew ran up the sails, ran down again sheepishly and stood on the deck instead, while the magnificent white wings of the doomed ship spread themselves slowly to the wind. The band of forty pieces struck up "Valencia," and Mother forced a tearful smile. A deadly foreboding that seems instinctive with the womenfolk of deep sea sailors had come upon her.

"They're off!" shouted the crowd on the dock. "Remember me to the South Seas, Herman! Reginald, don't forget to write! Oh, *Wal*-ter! Goodby! Goodby!"

"Goodby!" shouted the adventurers, a suspicious catch in their voices.

"Goodby!" shouted the crowd on the shore again.

The *Kawa's* sails billowed and filled. Father grasped the wheel in anticipation. Mother swayed and fell to the pier in a dead faint.

"Goodby!" shouted the crowd on the dock once more.

"Goodby! Goodby!" cried Dr. Traprock, trying to smile.

"Goodby!" replied the crowd again; and for five or ten minutes they continued to wave hats and flags and shout "Goodby!", now and then casting surreptitious glances at their watches. At the end of half an hour the band stopped playing "Valencia," and Mother came out of her faint and began to wave her handkerchief again.

"Well, we're off," shouted Swank, to fill the embarrassing silence.

"Yeh?" replied the crowd a little suspiciously.

"Why don't you start, then?" demanded a voice in the rear.

"Why *don't* we start?" Dr. Traprock whispered uneasily to Father.

Father only shook his head. For once he was baffled. The wind was with them, all the passengers were aboard, they had their clearance papers. In the meantime the crowd on the pier was thinning out perceptibly. The band had packed its forty pieces and walked over to a nearby trolley-car. Mother had fainted again, from sheer weariness. Poor Whinney tried to brighten the rapidly increasing gloom by tossing a roll of colored streamer to a friend on the dock. It missed the edge of the

"AND I A LOWLY TAR"

Kneeling at the feet of the pensive June, poor Hansom pours out a heartful of longing for the dainty daughter of his Skipper, from whom he is forever barred by rank and station, yet whom he loves nevertheless with a surpassing devotion. "Forgive me, Miss Triplett," he sighs ardently, "but though my suit is hopeless, I cannot still the passionate beating of my heart. You are my Captain; let me be your first mate."

"And I a Lowly Tar"

Nautical But Nice

NAUTICAL BUT NICE

(*Upper*): Night after night Hansom continues his hopeless wooing, singing sweet chanties to June as they recline in the romantic seclusion of the lifeboat; while innocent Clarence the Cabin-Boy, peeking over the rim of the gunwale, learns a little bit about life himself.

(*Lower*): Alas for peeping Toms! June has learned of Clarence's prying habits; and as he hurries past her next morning with Father's breakfast, she administers swift but adequate justice from the rear. Clarence picks himself up later, an older but a wiser man.

pier by several feet and sank limply into the water, where it slowly disappeared. The friend retaliated by tossing another roll of colored streamer at the ship, which failed to unroll in its flight and struck Swank smartly in the eye. There was an exchange of dirty looks.

"Ah, let's give her a push," someone in the crowd laughed sourly.

"Well, why don't you go home?" demanded Whinney. "You don't have to wait if you don't want to."

"You're darned tootin' we don't," the crowd replied, as they turned and walked away in disagreeable silence.

"I hope you *stay* home," called Swank.

"I hope you stay in the South Seas," retorted the last of the crowd over their shoulders. The hardy adventurers stared bitterly at the deserted pier. Father bit his lip in defeat. Dr. Traprock wandered disconsolately toward the stern.

"Captain," he called presently, "I've just been wondering if it would help to untie the *Kawa* from the dock?"

"Well, I'll be a son-of-a-gun," laughed Father, hurrying aft to cast off the hawser; and in less time than it takes to tell the *Kawa* had left the empty

dock and sailed into the moonlight on her last fatal voyage, accompanied by a few scattered jeers from the shore; and if anybody had told the hardy adventurers then that they would never see the faces of their loved ones again, that would have seemed too soon.

This ominous departure was but the first of a series of ill omens that befell the *Kawa* on her trip south. While passing through the Golden Gate she filled with water and sank. This incident might have passed unnoticed, had she not sunk twice more during the short run to New Guinea. Whenever a ship sinks three times in a voyage, it is generally accepted as a sure indication of trouble among those who go down to the sea; and when the *Kawa* sank a fourth time, on her way out of the harbor of Sydney, Father's anxiety increased. Folk laugh at the superstitions of sailormen, but few who have lived at sea will dispute their justification.

That night the mast broke into three pieces and fell to the deck. Father surveyed the wreckage and shook his head gloomily.

"It's a bad sign, sir," he confided to Dr. Traprock, who stood beside him with a long face. "A mighty bad sign. Among us seafarin' men, it's a sure omen of trouble. In my humble opinion, sir,

somebody has brung a curse onto this here ship."

At that moment Traprock grasped Father's arm and pointed in horrified silence. A single file of rats approached the rail, poised, and dived overboard one by one. Father nodded his head significantly.

Two days later the *Kawa* lost her rudder. Father's and Traprock's glances met.

"I wouldn't go to mention no names, sir," said Father, and he let his gaze rest for a moment on Herman Swank, asleep on the afterdeck, "but I'm beginnin' to think there's a Jonah aboard."

"Do you mean—Swank?" whispered Traprock hoarsely.

Father nodded ominously. Traprock whisked a tear from his eye.

"For the good of the ship," warned Father.

"For the good of the ship," Traprock agreed, clasping Father's hand soberly as he seized a marlinspike and tiptoed aft in silence.

The following morning Father discovered that the entire crew had died during the night of scurvy. Traprock stared at him in bewilderment.

"Then it wasn't Swank, after all?" he asked.

Father shook his head.

"But who—?"

By way of answer Father put this finger silently to his lip. Traprock turned slowly and looked where he pointed. Reginald Whinney was leaning far out over the rail, wrapped up in his observations of a group of sea-gardenias that were tangled in the stern.

"For the good of the ship," breathed Father.

Dr. Traprock grasped Father's hand again, and with tears streaming down his cheeks he started cautiously toward the unsuspecting figure beside the rail.

And that very afternoon the ship sank once more.

Dr. Traprock was sitting moodily on the after-deck when Father walked slowly toward him bearing the news. He read at a glance the message in Father's eye. With his chin thrust forward proudly he grasped Father's hand in his own, and they shook silently. Father's own cheeks were suspiciously wet.

"Traprock, I'm sorry," he said. "I'm *damned* sorry. I wouldn't have had this happen for worlds. You and I've sailed together many's the long year, and I had hoped we'd sail together many years more. But as I see it, there's only one course left. Maybe," he added with an apologetic laugh, "you think I'm just a superstitious old woman."

"No, not at all," Dr. Traprock assured him heartily. "I think you're perfectly right. I have the utmost respect for the traditions of the sea, and I do not blame you in the slightest. It is the only course left."

"Thank you, Traprock," said Father.

"Just tell them," said Dr. Traprock, removing his coat and poising a moment on the rail, "just tell them it was for the good of the ship."

For the next three days Father sailed the sea alone on the deserted *Kawa,* staring moodily at the horizon and recalling the happy times when the boat had rung with laughter and song. On the third day he turned in as usual, shortly before nine o'clock. His first indication of trouble was when the water in his cabin had risen to the level of his bunk. That night the *Kawa* sank again badly.

Father was a man of iron will, and once his duty was clear he did not shirk. Stopping only to spread a couple of pimento cheese sandwiches and thrust them into his hip pocket, along with his keys, wallet, and a small American flag, he mounted to the rail and turned for a last look at the *Kawa,* whereon he had spent so many happy years. Slowly he turned again and faced the limitless expanse of ocean that stretched on all sides.

"Curse you," he breathed. "Oh, curse the sea and all its superstitions!"

He tightened his belt.

"For the good of the ship," he murmured, and holding his nose, he jumped.

How long he was in the water, tossed and buffeted by the relentless waves, he has no idea. It may have been days and it may have been weeks. In the course of time he mercifully lost consciousness. When he opened his eyes again, he was lying inert upon a wide and sandy shore, lined with cocoanut trees and chattering monkeys.

Father's first act upon staggering to his feet, weak as he was, was to plant his water-soaked American flag in the sand and name his discovery Staten Island after his aunt, a Miss Florence Staten. The problem of food was not so easily solved. In vain Father wandered up and down the hard-packed beach, searching for something to eat. At length he sank down exhausted on the sand, facing the sea.

"Curse you," he sighed.

Even as he spoke a huge breaker rolled up the sand toward him, bearing a wooden box packed with provisions and ship's stores, and then receded silently, leaving the food scattered on the beach.

DR. WALTER E. TRAPROCK, F.R.S.S.E.U.

And now at last we meet Dr. Traprock himself, former owner of the *Kawa* and the dean of all the travel-writers. Here this famous adventurer and explorer is seen standing at the wheel and instructing the daughter of his old friend Triplett in the art of the sea-story, of which he is such a master. "Just stick to your desk, and never go to sea," sings Traprock wisely, "and *you* can write an autobiographee."

Dr. Walter E. Traprock, F.R.S.S.E.U.

Vulgar's Boat Song

VULGAR'S BOAT SONG

Sometimes at twilight, beneath the brizzl'm'st, lonely Vulgar leaves his faithful mop and takes out instead his worn mouth-organ; and while the star-fish begin to appear one by one and the dog-fish bay plaintively at the moon, this sentimental sailor plays for June some sweet Russian lullabies, including the famous song of the river whence he derives his name. June sits in his lap and listens by the hour. She *loves* harmonicas.

"Up to its old devil tricks," muttered Father suspiciously.

He had no sooner spoken than a second wave rolled up the beach carrying a small table and a full set of dishes, rapidly set places for two, and handed Father a menu in French as it disappeared down the sand.

"I don't trust it, I don't," Father muttered to himself, as a third wave dashed up the beach apologetically with some butter which the second wave apparently had forgotten; and all through his meal he continued to shake his head and mutter dubiously. His suspicions were justified. No sooner had he pushed back his plate than a fourth wave approached reluctantly, and when it receded it left a small slip of paper upside down on a little silver tray. Father seized the slip and scanned it hurriedly.

"Just as I thought," he groaned. "Oh, curse the sea! Curse it!"

Nor were his troubles yet over. His suspicions that the island was not deserted had been aroused when he noted that the table on the beach had been set for two. The choice between a deserted island and a cannibal island is so small that Father did not know whether to be surprised or sorry when a

heavy grunt behind him awoke him from his reverie, and he whirled about to find himself surrounded by a group of naked savages, who stood with folded arms and surveyed him with evident relish.

Father knew at a glance that he was "in for it." As he nodded cordially to his captors, a greeting which was returned very frigidly, a large cannibal in war-paint and feathers strode slowly to the center of the group and motioned Father to sit down beside him. The negroes formed a large semicircle behind these two figures, and slowly began to rock right and left, crooning a song that Father recognized as one of the hits from "Show Boat." At the conclusion of this song the cannibal king began to applaud violently and Father did the same. For an encore the two men at the end of the circle rose with tambourines and did a clever soft-shoe dance.

"Well, Mistah Interlockutah," said the Cannibal King, turning to Father, "dis am a great day fo' de race, sho' nuff!"

"So this is a great day for the race, eh," repeated Father promptly, recalling his last entertainment at the Elks' smoker. "Well, Mr. Johnson, maybe you'll tell us now what race is this a great day for?"

"Fo' de colored race," replied "Mr. Johnson," baring his white teeth in a grin and bowing to several imaginary friends in the audience, while the house rocked with applause and a double quartette rendered "Old Black Joe" with much feeling, and they were forced to raise and lower the curtain again and again for seven or eight encores.

"You were swell," said Father, turning to the King after the performance.

"Do you think so?" smiled the King modestly.

"*Think* so? Why, I *know* so," said Father, noting two or three natives lighting a fire under a huge copper cauldron. "You've got a natural gift for comedy. Why, you'd leave Moran and Mack way back in the shade."

"Oh, you're just saying that," said the King; but it was plain to see that he was pleased, nevertheless.

"I'm *not* saying it," Father continued with mounting enthusiasm, as the cauldron commenced to bubble slightly. "Why, you'd get over in New York like a million dollars. They'd eat you up," and he glanced nervously at the cauldron.

"It's my ambition to go to New York," confessed the King dreamily.

"It's *my* ambition, too," said Father desperately

as the cook commenced to stir the pot and glance toward him tentatively. "Whadye say, King, maybe we two could go together."

"Oh, I haven't got a *thing* to wear," sighed the King glancing down at himself.

"I can lend you plenty," urged Father, wiping the perspiration from his forehead. "You don't need much, just a change or two—and evenings—"

"I'll do it," decided the King suddenly.

As Father breathed a sigh of relief, a new terror assailed him.

"How will we get there?" he asked. "We haven't got a boat."

"We don't need a boat," said the King quietly.

Father looked at him in surprise.

"This is a floating island," he replied with a smile; and he rocked back and forth once or twice on the beach, and the line of palms behind him was seen to rise and fall slightly. So the eager natives all seized paddles, and at a signal from their leader they dipped them into the water and paddled north, arriving in New York after three weeks and leaving their island just inside the entrance to the harbor, where indeed it may be found today if any proof is needed of this story, and Father gave the King a letter of introduction to Mr. Ziegfeld, who was so

carried away by his natural skill and dancing ability that he put him under contract at once to star in several shows, in which he made a tremendous name for himself as a comedian and published his autobiography in the "Saturday Evening Post"; and that in fact, is the true story of how Al Jolson got his start.

At least, that is the way that Father told it to me.

Chapter VII

Strip Poker in the Fo'c'stle—What Went On, and What Came Off

Chapter VII

All of the sailors on the *Ruth F. Platt* were typical old shellbacks who might have stepped right out of the pages of a story-book, or a maritime autobiography.

The crew of my father's boat, in fact, was unlike any crew that ever sailed the sea. In the first place, they never seemed to do any work, but simply sat on hatch-covers all day long, chewing their pipes and uttering wise bits of philosophy between squirts of brown tobacco-juice. While the less fortunate seamen on other boats were spending their time at sea busily chipping rust, shifting cargo or oiling engines, our picturesque shellbacks of the *Minnie M. Fiske* apparently had none of these mundane duties to perform, but amused themselves by tying intricate knots in pieces of rope, or singing quaint old chanties of the sea.

I wasn't allowed forward of the mizzen mast, unless accompanied by my father or a military es-

cort, because that was the sacred domain of the crew; but I often sneaked into the fo'c'stle while Father was poring over charts or gin in his Cabin, and it was in this manner that I learned to play many of the ship's games. Anyone who has ever ventured across the Atlantic must know the important part which these games play in the social life of a ship. Deck-tag, squash and deck-quoits were very popular with the crew. Often the muffled thud of the shuffleboard could be heard in the fo'c'stle until the wee hours of the morning; and like as not a sailor was apt to be dragged from his watch to make fourth hand in a round of deck-tennis. Father realized the value of recreation among his men, and frequently deserted the wheel himself to toss a bean-bag with the boys.

One night when I had wandered forward to the fo'c'stle as usual, eager for adventure, I discovered the whole crowd—Knut Hansom, Swede, Britches, Clarence the Cabin-Boy, Vulgar, Olaf Olsen and the rest—seated in the gaff binnacle under the tops'l keel playing cards by the dim green glow of the port running light. They didn't pay the least attention to me, and I stood and watched them for at least five seconds before I attempted to join their game.

"Come on," I urged at last. "Deal this little girl a hand."

Knut Hansom's honest young face flushed with embarrassment.

"Sorry, Skipper," he apologized awkwardly, "but this here ain't exactly a proper game fer ladies."

"That's all right," I urged. "I've played poker before."

"Well, you see," continued Hansom uneasily, "what we're playing is *strip* poker."

For the benefit of my landlubber readers, it might be well to explain at this point that strip poker, as it is played on shipboard, differs materially from the "poker" familiar to those less hardy souls who have never ventured down to the sea in ships.[1] In the first place, strip poker on the high seas is actually more similar to our old-fashioned game of "Authors," except that spades are always trumps, and in addition these spades have got to be colored red or else they don't count. As a result, it is practically impossible to win with ordinary

[1] What the landlubber really means when he refers to "poker" is another game known as cribbage, supposed to have been introduced into America by the English sparrow.

playing-cards, and the game is usually played instead with marbles. It is not much fun with marbles, either.

"Why can't I play strip poker?" I demanded.

"Well, you see, it would be bad enough if you won," Hansom hesitated, his face scarlet, "but think what would happen if you lost!"

For the first time I now noticed certain oddities in the appearance of the crew. Olsen, for example, was wearing three pairs of trousers and Hansom's socks. Clarence the Cabin Boy had on Swede's dungarees, Britches was wearing Clarence's seaboots, and Swede was wearing Britches' beard. Poor Vulgar, on the other hand, was wearing nothing but a gold watch-chain with an Elk's tooth in the center. When the hand was finished he regretfully handed over the Elk's tooth to Olsen also.

"This looks like an interesting and instructive game," I said. "I think I'd like to come in."

"What have you got to offer?" asked Olsen suspiciously.

"I got this pair of dungarees," I replied.

"A pair of dungarees ain't enough," he frowned. "What else you got on underneath them?"

"N-nothing," I confessed.

"That will be plenty," he smiled, shuffling the cards. "Ante up!"

Our method of dealing the cards was characteristic of the sea. In the first place a large square was ruled out on the hatch-cover by two assistant stewards, and this square was divided carefully into fourteen segments, each of which was numbered "H." In the center of this square the first steward now drew a circle in white chalk measuring exactly five feet wide by six and a half feet long, which the second steward erased after a brief argument and drew again, this time in *pink* chalk. When this was concluded the first steward placed a number of deck-chairs around this imitation "race track," and the second steward went below and returned with six moth-eaten toy horses, all named "Man o' War," which he placed side by side on the starting line and sounded a bugle, upon which signal all the players seized their cards and walked rapidly across the hatch-cover, chatting to each other and scuffing out most of the chalk lines with their boots as they trampled the six horses and both stewards underfoot and proceeded across the boat to the lee scuppers, where the strip poker game was being held.

When all the cards had been dealt in this

A GAME OF STRIP POKER

Little June has joined this game in the fo'c's'le against the advice of honest Hansom, who has already lost his shirt; and as a result she has forfeited her only pair of trousers to the leering Swede. At the conclusion of the present hand Clarence is forced to sacrifice his other boot, and First Mate Murphy hands over his jersey; but June manages to retain her own jacket by cleverly palming an ace of spades in her big toe. "If *I* lose my shirt," she muses, "I wonder what fo'c's'le say?"

A Game of Strip Poker

"Keep It Clean!"

"KEEP IT CLEAN!"

Sometimes June is not so successful at cards. Here she has just lost her suit; and Knut Hansom, seizing this desolate moment when she is wearing nothing but a barrel to force home a moral lesson, is explaining to her some of the evils attendant upon gambling. "What would happen if your Father caught you now?" he warns. "What would happen if he took you across his knee?" "He'd probably get his hand full of splinters," replies June thoughtfully.

manner, Olsen cut the deck[1] and we looked at our hands. I had a rather good hand, as it happened, consisting of four kings, a queen, a jack, and a United Cigar Store coupon. Olsen had three pairs of deuces, and poor Vulgar held nothing but a cigarette card with a photograph of Lily Langtry. After we had compared these hands with each other, and enjoyed a good laugh at Vulgar's expense, we discarded our cards and drew again. This time Olsen drew five aces, Swede drew his revolver, and Clarence drew a small package wrapped in tissue paper which, when opened, proved to contain a tiny pair of pink silk pajamas. Clarence held these up amid the general laughter of the crew.

"What did *you* draw, Skipper?" asked Olsen.

I looked for the first time at my own hand. It held nothing but a plain slip of white paper with the number "23."

"Twenty-three. . . twenty-three. . ." mumbled Olsen, rapidly scanning a rule-book which he brought out of his pocket. " 'Twenty-three,' " he read. " 'The person who draws twenty-three must take off her pants, or pay a Forfeit.' "

[1] In strip poker it is customary for the dealer to make a small notch in the deck with a sharp knife whenever he deals a hand.

"I refuse," I said indignantly. "What's the Forfeit?"

" 'The Forfeit,' " read Olsen, " 'is to take off her pants.' "

Too late I realized that I should never have gotten into this strip poker game in the first place. Obviously I could not welch now. Hansom's loyal face was purple with embarrassment, but it seemed he likewise could do nothing to help me. With trembling lips I stepped behind a tall screen, and presently I tossed out my shirt, then my pants, then after a pause one stocking, then another stocking, then my shoes, then my hat, then a pause, then a silk slip, then another pause, then a gathering murmur, then a suppressed snicker, and then after a long pause I threw out a little white fluffy thing upon the deck and there was another pause.

"All ready?" called Olsen, his voice trembling with eagerness.

"All ready," I answered.

"All ready," repeated several voices, and two or three people high above me echoed "Ready here!" and the lights were lowered slowly, and the entire crew knelt in a semicircle before the screen with their palms extended upward, while one held the

reins of a large pasteboard elephant that raised and lowered its trunk rhythmically, and a gong sounded, and then a parade of slave girls advanced slowly from behind the screen, breaking right and left in two lines that rounded the deck in single file and halted facing the screen, where they likewise knelt and extended their hands with palms upward, and the gong sounded again, and a large negro in a gold loin-cloth leapt out from behind the screen brandishing a scimitar, while the rest of the lights faded out, leaving only a silver spot on the screen, and the gong sounded for the third time; and at that precise moment Hansom jumped to his feet with upraised hand and shouted "Stop!"

"What's the matter?" inquired Olsen peevishly, while the sailors rose to their feet again uneasily, and the elephant's trunk stopped swaying, and the negro whispered to one of the slave girls: "It's the District Attorney's Office," and two or three people in the rear of the audience seized their hats and started up the aisle angrily demanding their money back.

"You can't ask Skipper to take off her pants," said Hansom. "She's a girl."

"Why, hell," said Olsen, genuinely puzzled. "That's all the more reason."

"We won her pants, didn't we?" demanded the crew.

"All right," snapped Hansom. "I'll give you my own pants!"

"It isn't exactly the pants—" began Olsen; but Hansom was at him like a flash.

"This little girl is not going to be forced to take off her pants before a group of men," he began, "and anybody that tries to make her do so will have to answer to me. Are we gentlemen, gentlemen, or are we cads?"

The crew hung their heads.

"Olsen, do you want my pants or a punch in the guzzler?" Hansom demanded in a steely voice; and after thinking it over Olsen finally came to the conclusion that since he didn't know exactly what a guzzler was, it might be safer to take the pants. So Hansom took off his own pants instead, and gave them to Olsen, and I came out from behind the screen fully clothed; and just then I felt a rough hand grab me by the shoulder.

"What the hell are you doing down here?" demanded Father.

"Playing strip poker," I replied in terror.

"I'll teach you to play strip poker," said Father grimly; and without further ado he seized a large

VIRGIN ISLES AHOY!

(*Upper*): Land ho! Upon the poop deck June, Clarence and Hansom strain desperately at the w'ndl'ss, in order to head the boat around in the right direction.

(*Lower*): Every moment the strange shore line looms nearer. High up in the rompers Hansom and June stare in fascination at their first glimpse of these long-awaited islands; while Clarence the Cabin Boy, unable to restrain his enthusiasm, claps his hands eagerly. "Goody, goody," he cries. "I'm going to see a Virgin!"

Virgin Isles Ahoy!

Courtesy Brown Bros.

"Grab Your Oars, Boys, Grab Your Oars!"

"GRAB YOUR OARS, BOYS, GRAB YOUR OARS!"

Not a moment is lost as the eager crew leave their ship, sinking and forgotten, and pile into the little dinghy. As they row with all haste toward the welcoming Virgins June guides the heavy boat in the stern, while old Britches locates himself in the bow where he can give directions, and also get first pick when they land.

leather strap and unbuttoned my overalls and then and there, before the entire crew, he took off my pants anyway.

And it was at that crucial moment that I heard far above me the familiar warning cry of the look-out: "Loooo-ooo-ok out!" and a moment later to my immense relief he landed on his ear on the deck right at Father's feet, and rose groggy but game.

"Land ahoy!" he gasped.

"Which direction?" cried Father, leaping to his feet and dumping me upon the deck.

"I forget," panted the look-out, shinnying back up the mast with such rapidity that he landed on his neck before us again before we knew he had gone.

"West by Mae West," he panted. "It must be the Virgin Isles!"

"How do you know?" asked Father.

"I just saw the Mary Ware Dennett jury drifting past in a lifeboat!"

The excitement on our boat was at fever pitch. The frenzied sailors tugged at ropes, raised the sails, lowered them, turned the wheel in all directions and even put paddles over the side, while several of the crew in their excitement leapt overboard and swam on ahead. Even Father, I

noticed, had a curious glint in his eye. As for me, I clung to the rail and scanned the approaching shore with mounting interest.

At last I was really going to see a Virgin.

Chapter VIII

I Decide to Become a Virgin

Chapter VIII

The Virgin Isles are located in a (fortunately) little traveled portion of the South Seas, just opposite the Isle of Man[1]; and on these exquisite jots of coral, set like jewels under the tropical sky, there exist the last lovely members of a fast disappearing race. In fact, they are believed by many to be already extinct.

Despite their volcanic nature, the climate of the Virgins, as they are called, seems at a first impression comparatively cool. As a result their slopes and ridges are almost nude, a fact which shows off their formation to the greatest advantage and lends materially to their natural charm. Their general effect as seen from afar is extraordinarily beautiful, being composed of gently rolling curves and undulating lines that appeal irresistibly to the eye; and

[1] In general their longitude is unknown; but their latitude, on the other hand, is strongly suspected.

these attractive contours lose nothing of their appeal as the admiring visitor draws nearer and explores their hidden ravines and hollows. Due to this open character, moreover, they are always easy of approach by sea or by land or even by telephone.

And the inhabitants of this earthly paradise are as fresh and unspoiled as the islands from which they derive their name. In their innocence they wear little or no clothing, save a customary grass skirt and the sacred floral wreath[1] of wild thyme, a little blossom which is found in abundance everywhere on the island. Husbands are of course *taboo;* and in consequence the Virgins do all the heavy labor usually accomplished by the other sex, such as reading the newspapers and smoking a cigar and occasionally mowing the lawn, in addition to the more usual feminine duties of sewing and tending their babies. Sometimes in winter they organize a basketball team.

For the benefit of those skeptical males among my readers, who might feel in their conceited way that the lack of men would prove a serious detriment to the social life upon these islands, let me

[1] This native floral wreath, or *lei,* is executed by the Virgins with exquisite skill, and excels in quality and general charm any *leis* to be found elsewhere in the South Seas.

state at once that nowhere in all my travels have I ever found a more peaceful, prosperous and satisfied group of natives than these Virgins of the South Sea Islands. In fact, the maidens wear nothing but a smile all day long; and their perfect contentment is but another proof of the fact that woman's complete emancipation is a huge success. Morning, noon, and night the carefree laughter and song of the Virgins mingles with the soft call of the nightingale and the lark, and the hoarse bellowing of the bul-bul among the hibiscus, as the maidens wander hand-in-hand, weaving wreaths of lotus-flowers or discussing poetry and the fine arts. Never once have I heard them complain of the loneliness or solitude, or lament the fact that they have no husbands. As a matter of fact, with a new ship stopping at the island every day or so, they wouldn't have much time for husbands anyway.

Certainly I shall never forget[1] the perfect picture that met our eyes as the *Aimee S. MacPherson* rounded the outermost reef and sailed into the tranquil lagoon before the largest atoll, No-Men Atoll, where we dropped anchor. On every side

[1] Just one minute while I make a note down here never to forget it. I have so many of these things which I shall never forget that they sometimes slip my mind.

the shore was lined with Virgins, at least as far as we could see. There were tall Virgins and short Virgins, slim Virgins and stout Virgins, blonde, brunette and titian Virgins, fair-skinned and olive skinned, smiling and wistful Virgins, Virgins with roses in their teeth, Virgins from Brooklyn, Virgins who pronounced "you" as "eee-you," Virgins who hike along the Palisades on Sunday afternoons, Virgins from Bryn Mawr, Virgins who collect pressed ferns, Virgins who never read Mencken, Virgins who fainted at "Dracula," Virgins named Babs, Charity Bazaar Virgins, assistant librarian Virgins, and Junior League Virgins, crowding the shore and waving their fluttering handkerchiefs in unison as they spelled out the native word: "Gimmi-gimmi-gimmi," which means "You're welcome!" in Virgin.

The excitement on our boat at this spectacular greeting exceeded if anything the enthusiasm on the shore. As the welcoming call of the Virgins sounded across the water, the paralyzed sailors stood staring spellbound for a moment, while the ropes ran limply through their fingers and the sails flapped forgotten in the breeze. Then with one accord they leapt to the rail and plunged overboard, not even waiting for the dinghy in their

haste, and swam like madmen toward the shore. In vain Father bellowed after them to come back and reef the tops'ls, and anchor the boat securely; he might have been shouting at the wind. At last he turned with a rueful smile and made the boat fast by himself.

"Well, they're only young once," he said, gazing a little wistfully at the empty deck.

I was as eager to go ashore as the rest, and no sooner were chores done than Father and I clambered into the dinghy and took the oars. Just as we were about to shove off, a familiar gurgle above us attracted our attention. To our surprise there was old Britches still leaning pensively on the rail and sucking his pipe dreamily.

"Why didn't you swim ashore like the rest?" asked Father in amazement.

Britches took a long drag at his pipe; and when he spoke at last his voice was soft and far-away. "It's a long story, Captain," he began slowly. "You see I loved a girl—once. For forty years I've carried her image in my heart, sir, and I shall never love another. That little girl was everything to me. She was the girl o' my dreams," and his voice suddenly quivered and he took another long drag at his pipe, and a single smoke ring rose and lingered

THE KING OF THE VIRGIN ISLES

Outside one of the largest dwellings of the Virgins, Radclyffe Hall, a few of the Island beauties surround the current King of the Virgin Isles, none other than Herman Swank. As may be seen in this photograph, the dainty Virgins dwell for the most part in a straw-thatched *patio,* which is a native word meaning the patio house where men aren't allowed. This is not taken very seriously, however.

Courtesy Wide World Photos

The King of the Virgin Isles

An Island Festival

AN ISLAND FESTIVAL

The fleet's in; and already Olaf ("Horrible") Olsen has selected for his bride the pale and lovely Owadalayo. They have presented themselves to Swank, who is to perform the brief wedding ceremony, which on a Virgin Isle is so brief as to be practically instantaneous. For his witnesses Olaf has chosen old Sedlitz and his island consort, Sal Hepatica (Little Flower).

above his head, and in the center of the smoke ring, sure enough, was the face of the girl of his dreams, smiling at him through the years. "So that was the reason I didn't jump overboard with the rest," concluded old Britches gently, as Father's eyes filled with tears. "That, and the fact I can't swim."

"Come on ashore with us in the dinghy," urged Father. "You ain't ever seen the Virgin Islands."

"Well, at that, I guess there ain't no harm in just taking a little *look*," admitted old Britches, knocking out his pipe and pulling at the oars with such eagerness that we were ashore in less than no time. He didn't even wait to pull up the boat.

As Father and I stepped out onto the sand of the now almost deserted beach, we heard the sound of a distant tom-tom; and suddenly through the thicket stepped four tall Virgins, clad in native uniform and carrying spears. They formed in a hollow circle with spears upraised; and at a given signal the bushes parted again, and the tall figure of Luk-i-bum, the Chief, advanced slowly down the beach toward us, his white robe trailing in the sand and a wreath of wild thyme twined upon his head. As he started to raise his fan in the formal gesture of greeting, I heard Father gasp in surprise.

"My God!" he breathed slowly. "Can it be—it is—*Herman Swank!*"

At this voice from the past the Chief halted abruptly, and the fan fluttered from his fingers. For a moment he stared at Father unbelievingly, as if seeing a ghost; then with a cry of recognition he rushed forward and threw his arms about his old shipmate's neck.

"Triplett!" he choked. "Ezra Triplett! By all that's extraordinary!"

"Fancy meeting *you* on a Virgin Island," chuckled Father through tears of joy.

"Why not?" asked Swank, removing his arms a trifle coolly.

"I mean, I thought you had drowned with the *Kawa*," hurried Father. "Well, well, this certainly seems like old times. How is Captain Traprock, and old Whinney?" he added, to change the subject. "Have they gone native, too?"[1]

"They're both here," nodded Swank, not without a shade of irritation in his voice. "They came to visit me as soon as they heard I was King, and they've stayed ever since. Oh, not that they aren't

[1] "Going native," as it is called, consists of taking off your shoes and stockings and running around barefoot like the savages. It is practiced by most white men in the tropics, who find it much more comfortable in a hot climate.

welcome, of course, but—" He suddenly checked himself with a friendly smile. "Well, well, if here isn't old Walter now. We were just talking about you, Walter!" and he waved to a khaki-clad figure with black moustaches and a weather-beaten sun-helmet, who was hurrying down the beach. "Walter, look who's here!"

"Ezra Triplett!" exclaimed Dr. Traprock delightedly. "My old shipmate of the *Kawa*. And I suppose," regarding me quizzically, "this is your little daughter?"

"June is quite a girl," said Father proudly. "She's going to write a travel book, too."

"Well, my dear," said Dr. Traprock, placing his hand on my head and patting my curls, "will you accept the advice of an old timer, and remember one thing: never put anything into your book that is not strictly true. You cannot fool the public on a travel-book. The readers and the critics and the judges of the book-clubs are old hardened mariners themselves, who can recognize a real honest sea-story the minute they see one. You can't put anything over on *them*, June. The success of my own book," modestly, "depended largely on the fact that one word was as true as the next. Just

keep in mind always the motto of the adventure-writer: *First, Last and Always—the Truth!*"

How often have I thought since of this sage counsel by the most famous travel-writer of them all.

In the meantime Father and Traprock and Swank had sat down on the beach around a huge shell of *hoopa* (the native drink of the South Sea Islands) and were swapping stories of their adventures and singing the famous song of the Virgin Isles, "Kawa Me Back to Old Virgin-ny"; and while they were talking I wandered aimlessly down the beach, gathering the pretty shells and pearls which lay everywhere in great abundance. In the distance the tom-tom kept up its steady beating, and almost unconsciously my steps strayed in its direction. My first intimation that I had strayed too far was when I discovered myself in a large clearing, filled with Virgins all hurrying past me bound in the direction of the drums. As I paused in bewilderment a pleasant voice sounded in my ear.

"Hi begs your pardon, Miss," said a stranger in a marked Cockney accent, "but Hi wonders hif Hi can be hof hany hassistance."

I stared at this newcomer in astonishment. His old shirt was dirty and torn, his trousers caked

with mud, and his feet protruded through his shoes. Beneath his battered hat his face was covered with a week's stubble of beard, the yellow stubs of teeth gleamed venomously in his tobacco-stained mouth, and I noticed furthermore that three fingers were missing from his right hand.[1] As I backed away in terror, he clutched my arm.

"Come, now, Miss," he pleaded, his hot breath upon my cheek. "Don't you be hafraid of old Sedlitz. Old Sedlitz, 'e wouldn't 'arm a 'air o' your 'ead."

"Who are you?" I gasped faintly.

"Sedlitz is me monicker," he replied sadly. "Old Jack Sedlitz, sailor and adventurer. Hi was born in Epsom Downs, Miss—Hi'm just an old salt from Epsom—and Hi run away from 'ome and shipped to sea when Hi was but a tiny lad. Hi suppose my 'ead was full of Beatrice Grimshaw, Miss. Now Hi'm just a broken wreck of humanity, a bit of driftwood on life's stormy sea, the flotsam and jetsam of the tropics—alone and forgotten—the scum of the earth, Miss."

I put my arm sympathetically in his, and he

[1] As a result of this discovery I have often wondered whether this mysterious stranger had any connection with Capt. Peter Fitzurse, whose mysterious disappearance several years ago has never been explained.

squared his shoulders and swung his cane with a jaunty air that suggested better days.

"Ah, well, life 'as its Epsom Downs," added old Sedlitz, who was a bit of a philosopher in his way.

"But what are you doing down here?" I asked, as we strolled slowly in the direction of the tom-tom.

"Hi'm a beach-comber, Miss," he answered with a simple dignity that I could not but admire. "Hit's my job to keep these beaches all curried sleek and shiny. All day long Hi comb them, Miss, up and down, up and down, till Hi'm fair crazy; but 'e—" and he jerked his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of Swank—"*'e's* never satisfied. Always poking around and finding old Lily Cups or pieces of newspapers that blowed onto them when me back was turned. As if it wasn't 'ard enough to keep them clean, without everybody 'oldin' picnics and festivals like they're 'aving to-night," he broke off resentfully.

"What festival are they holding tonight?" I asked curiously.

"Why, hain't you heard?" He stared at me in astonishment. "This here is the Festival of the Virgins. They 'old one every Tuesday afternoon."

THE OLD SALT FROM EPSOM

"Don't yer be scared o' me, Miss," pleads old Sedlitz, as he approaches June in the village square, his hair bristling and his mouth gaping desirously. "Old Sedlitz is me name, just a 'armless old salt from Epsom, and I wouldn't 'urt a flea!" "But I'm not a flea," June trembles.

Courtesy Wide World Photos

The Old Salt from Epsom

June Learns to Be a Virgin

JUNE LEARNS TO BE A VIRGIN

"Left foot extended with toe pointing downward," explains lovely Ata Babaï, as she goes through the motions of being a Virgin for June's edification, "left hand on hip, and right hand placed behind the head—now incline the body slowly to the left." June observes her instructions carefully, but somehow she just can't get the proper inclination. "I'm afraid Virgins are born—not made," she sighs disconsolately.

"Do you—do you suppose I could see it?" I asked, clutching his arm eagerly. "I've always been dying to see a Virgin."

"Why, sure," he said slowly, gazing at me with a new light in his eye. His great hairy hand slowly crept up my arm, and he pulled me toward him. "You know, Miss, you might not make a bad Virgin yourself."

"Oh, now, go on," I blushed, pleased in spite of myself. It was the first time a man had ever complimented me.

"Why don't you decide to become a Virgin tonight?" suggested Sedlitz suddenly. "Look, Hi can fix it up in no time. Then you can live here on the Hisland," he urged with mounting enthusiasm, "and Hi'll bring you jelly-fish and grape-fruit rinds and other little dainties that Hi pick up along the beach, and you won't have to do anything but twine them in your hair—"

"But what would Father say?" I hesitated.

"Oh, shoot," scoffed Sedlitz, his eyes glittering in his eagerness, "your Father won't care. 'E probably thinks you're one already."

In our excitement we had quickened our pace until now we were almost running up the beach. Steadily the thumping of the tom-tom grew louder,

and we could hear the murmur of many voices, and a steady tinkling noise like little bells. Now and again a high monotone rose above the babel of voices, and fell again. As we panted hand-in-hand up the beach, I spied old Britches seated on a near-by stump with his arms about two lovely maidens and his pipe glowing with satisfaction.

"Oh, Britches," I called happily as I ran past him, "I'm going to become a Virgin!"

I heard his pipe clank on the hard sand as he started to his feet, but I had already disappeared up the beach.

In a short time we reached a large crescent-shaped lagoon, and here we abruptly halted. A weird sight met our eyes. Gathered about this vast semi-circle were literally thousands of Virgins, chattering to one another and occasionally beating their hands together and nodding perfunctorily. Each Virgin held a tiny tea-cup, and as she stirred it with a silver spoon I recognized the tinkling sound that had puzzled me from afar.

In the center of this group I now made out a raised dais, upon which stood a table and two chairs. As I watched, the leading Virgin seized a mallet and began to pound this table vigorously, producing the tom-tom noise I had heard down the

beach. Instantly the gathering of Virgins became quiet, and a slim Virgin with *pince-nez* glasses rose and began to read from a paper in her hand in a high nasal monotone. Slowly the voices of the group rose again, and the chattering and tinkling of tea-cups were resumed once more.

"It's a literary report," whispered Old Sedlitz in my ear. "Every week one of the Virgins reads a book, and prepares a report upon it for the Festival."

At the conclusion of this exercise the high nasal voice ceased, and the seated Virgins beat their palms again appreciatively, while the leading Virgin began to sound her steady tom-tom on the table and shout something that sounded like "Doctor blablabla. . ." An excited flurry of whispering started in the front row, and spread back swiftly, increasing to a murmur as the various Virgins began to crane their necks and stare behind them at the rear of the group, and presently a very pale little man with long hair and gold-rimmed glasses fastened with a black satin cord walked down the aisle, clad in a frock coat and white spats, and mounted the dais and bowed to the leading Virgin and removed his glasses. Instantly the excited whispering ceased, the gathering became quiet,

and the newcomer began to speak in the same nasal voice as the previous speaker, only higher.

"'E's a famous author," old Sedlitz explained to me in an aside, "who has just written a very obscene book about Sex. 'E's quite a social lion among the Virgins."

"Do they always have literary discussions at these Festivals?" I asked in surprise.

"Oh, no," replied Sedlitz. "Last week they had a representative from the Methodist Board of Prohibition, Temperance and Public Morals, who talked to them an hour about the Younger Generation and the Liquor Problem. None of them have any children," he added irrelevantly.

During these questions the high nasal voice had continued; and now I began to notice the Virgins in the first row slump forward in attitudes of prostrate adoration. The entire group was still as death, their eyes fastened devoutly on the little speaker, who was rocking on his heels and uttering shrill cries, which were greeted in turn by gasps of admiration from the audience. As his voice rose several Virgins swooned upon the beach, and others held out their arms silently toward him. He finished his speech amid a violent burst of cheers, applause, and cries of trampled Virgins, as the

whole group surged toward the platform, waving their hands, pressing copies of his book forward for him to autograph, and snatching shreds of his coat for keepsakes. For a moment he struggled desperately, then he went down before the advancing line of Virgins and disappeared from view. Three days later the long black satin cord of his glasses was discovered trampled deep into the sand.

In the meantime the leading Virgin was beating her tom-tom louder and louder upon the table and shouting something that sounded like "Election! Election!" The cries of the frenzied natives, the savage rhythm of the tom-toms, the press of surging bodies made a barbaric picture that stirred my blood. It was the sacred call of Virginity crying for a Purpose. Unconsciously I left Sedlitz's side and drifted toward the center of the group.

". . . nominate Miss June Triplett for. . . " shouted Sedlitz above the babel.

The tom-tom beat faster and faster, the blood-curdling shrieks of the surrounding Virgins increased, the clicking of the tea-cups grew to a steady din. I began to throw my arms aloft as they did, raising my voice and shouting unintelligible sounds. Someone ripped the clothes from

my back and fastened a grass skirt around my waist. Another thrust a floral wreath upon my rumpled hair. I seemed to lose all sense of what I was doing. Over the milling shoulders of the throng I caught a single glimpse of Sedlitz's face, leering and nodding to me suggestively.

"June! June! June!"

It was Knut Hansom's voice. Summoned by faithful old Britches, he had appeared in the nick of time. The Virgins fell away in sudden terror as he brandished a huge revolver, and I saw Sedlitz turn and beat a discreet retreat up the beach.

"June, what does this mean?"

Shamefacedly I stepped forward from the cowering group, trying to cover my telltale grass skirt with my hands. In ominous silence old Britches led me down the beach, while Hansom brought up the rear, keeping the Virgins covered with his revolver until we were out of sight. Old Britches did not speak until we were safely back on the deck of the *Mary R. Rinehart*. Then he turned me sadly over his knee, and proceeded to give me a sound spanking.

"To think that you should try to become a Virgin," he said sorrowfully. "Have you no regard for the feelings of the men on this ship? Have you

IN THE NICK OF TIME!

"June! June! June!" It is Knut Hansom's voice, rising clear above the persuasive siren-song of the Virgins; and a moment later her faithful hero has torn her from the treacherous embrace of these South Sea Loreleis, and saved her from a horrible fate ere it is too late. With pistol leveled he stands off the menacing Virgins as he supports the fainting girl in his manly arms. Lucky June!

In the Nick of Time!

Britches Takes Affairs Into His Own Hands

BRITCHES TAKES AFFAIRS INTO HIS OWN HANDS

(*Upper*): Back on the deck of the ship faithful old Britches raises his hands in horror at the tattered Virgin costume which June is still wearing, telltale evidence of her narrow escape from the fell clutches of the Islanders.

(*Below*): In Father's absence Britches himself takes the wayward June over his knee, and administers maritime discipline on the spur of the moment.

no loyalty to your old shipmates? Wait till your Father hears about this."

I hung my head in shame.

It was three days later that Father finally showed up on the shore. He appeared out of the thicket and wandered unsteadily down the beach, supported on either side by Traprock and Swank, who set him down at the water's edge and waved to us to come fetch him. Four of our sailors managed to roll him into the dinghy, and we got him over the side of the ship at last by the use of an emergency block-and-tackle. His eyes were bloodshot, his necktie untied, and his hair was twined with vine-leaves. A disheveled floral wreath rested about his neck, and the remains of a grass skirt hung about his waist.

"Father, what has happened?" I demanded.

"Sssh," he whispered thickly. "I'm a Virgin."

I turned him sadly across my knee, before the entire crew, and proceeded to give him a sound spanking.

Chapter IX

"I Am Your Captain's Daughter!"

Chapter IX

"Women ain't going to do you no good, June. Taking them by and large, they're mostly liars, anyhow."

We had tied up the *Virginia C. Gildersleeve* at the dock at Brisbane, Australia, and Father had seen me casting curious eyes at the gold-toothed, plump barmaids and sailors' sweethearts along the waterfront. Ever since our experiences in the Virgin Isles, I had been pale and thoughtful, my mind filled with strange ideas. The Festival of the Virgins had given me a sudden realization of all that I was missing. The rustle of grass skirts, the glint in Sedlitz's eye, the barbaric rhythm of the dance had set new and unsuspected longings awake in me, and they haunted me still. All at once I hated my cracked sou'wester and mannish oilskins. I wanted to be attractive and loved by men. I wanted to learn about life.

here she bobbed my hair, fixed my lips with a red stick, and dressed me in a spangled skirt. I stared in the mirror, fascinated at what I saw. My dreams had come true. I was grown up at last!

"Now come downstairs, dearie," urged my middle-aged friend, flashing her gold teeth in a bright smile, "and I'll interduce you to some of the boys and girls."

Almost fearfully I followed her down the long winding stairs, wobbling unsteadily on my high heels. At the bottom of the stairs she pushed open a door, and a burst of noise, lights, laughter almost bowled me backward. The long room was crowded with merrymakers, chatting and singing around an upright piano and clinking glasses; while along a bar that ran the length of the room the sailors from our ship were draining glasses filled with foaming beer. They turned to greet me with a shout as I entered.

Suddenly I paused and stood frozen with terror. In the doorway, his face white and drawn, Knut Hansom was staring at me as if I were a ghost. The next moment he sprang forward with a fearful oath, upsetting tables and chairs in his mad rush, and grabbed me by the shoulders.

"June Triplett!" he choked, "you're coming straight back with me to the ship!"

"I'll do nothing of the kind," I retorted furiously. "Leave go of me!"

In vain I struggled desperately, striking my little fists again and again into his face, kicking and biting like a caged tigress. He was too strong for me. In a couple of minutes I found myself flat on my face with my right arm twisted behind me in a hammer-lock. Hansom seized me around the waist, and marched me unceremoniously down the pier.

"You little hell-cat," he glared at me, "what do you mean by getting mixed up with a resort like that?"

"Oh, I hate you," I sobbed. "I hate you! I hate you!"

He set me down on the deck of the *Marie L. Stopes* and stared at me unbelievingly.

"Why do you hate me, June?"

"I wanted to get dressed up in pretty things, so that you would notice me," I managed to blurt out. "I want somebody to love me."

"But *I* love you, June," he said simply.

I stared at him in astonishment. Could it be that he was fooling? No. The two tears that

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THE GIRL GROWS OLDER

"There isn't any stork," begins the mysterious shore woman, a Mrs. Dennett, as June reclines upon the thatched floor of the "Sailors' Snug Harbor" and learns the facts of life from her rouged old lips. Ata Babaï casually adjusts the white Blossom of Innocence in her dark hair, and lovely Owadalayo pats June's head in kindly approval. June herself listens eagerly while life becomes an open book for her, and she learns at last the true identity of Santa Claus.

The Girl Grows Older

Courtesy U. & U.

Mate Hunger

MATE HUNGER

"I hate you," sobs June, "I hate you, I hate you!" Hansom has just discovered her amid the tawdry fleshpots of the Sailors' Snug Harbor, and has dragged her unceremoniously back to the ship; and June feebly resists his caveman tactics. Yet in her heart of hearts she knows that hate is akin to love, and that the honest bosom of Hansom is burning with a steadfast devotion for his Captain's daughter—a devotion, alas! that must ever be unrequited.

squeezed themselves from between his shut lids and rolled down his honest cheeks convinced me of that.

"Then—why don't you kiss me?" I asked softly.

"I'll never kiss a girl," he replied solemnly, "until I have married her."

"Why not?" I demanded irritably. "That's half the fun."

"I'm just superstitious, perhaps," admitted Hansom, "but it's the way I feel."

"Very well," I said haughtily. "I guess you don't love me, after all."

"It isn't that, June," he began softly. "You don't understand. You see, my father met my mother once in a secluded spot, just such as this; and they became engaged there. And then when they were engaged my father asked my mother if he could kiss her. My mother agreed—" his voice broke—"and that very night on the way home my father was killed at a railroad crossing; and so that is why I have always refused to kiss a girl until we were married."

I pressed his hand sadly. I understood.

That night while Father and I sat in the cabin there came a knock on the door. Hansom entered

with his hat upon his head and his sea-bag slung across his back.

"Captain Triplett," he said frankly, "I love your daughter."

"What do you mean?" roared Father, rising to his feet purple with rage.

"There is no need for you to speak, sir," continued Hansom in a calm voice to which Father could not help but give ear. "I know full well that I have committed what constitutes an unpardonable breach of etiquette upon the high seas. It is not for the likes of me, a common sailor, to cast eyes of affection upon the daughter of my Captain. That I know. Yet the dictates of the heart are not subject to the hardy discipline of those who go down to the sea in ships—" He lowered his head a moment, and I caught him stealing a sly glance at his cuff—"and I cannot help my love for June. And therefore, sir," he concluded, standing very straight with his chin thrust out bravely, "I have come to say farewell!"

"Farewell?" echoed Father aghast.

"Farewell," nodded Hansom gravely. "I have considered the matter deeply, sir, and my course is clear. My love for your daughter is stronger than my sense of duty. Therefore, rather than

break the laws of the sea, I am going to leave your boat!"

"But we are out at sea," gasped Father. "We sailed an hour ago."

"I cannot go back on my decision," said Hansom firmly. "I go to meet my fate."

"Hansom, by God," said Father, gripping his hand, "you're a man, Hansom!"

I was crying softly in a corner.

"Goodby, June," said Knut simply. "You are the Captain's daughter, and I a common sailor. I only hope that as the years roll by you will think occasionally of one who loved beyond his rank—but loved you well."

And turning with steady step he walked out the door and toward the rail. The darkness swallowed him. A moment later there was a single splash, and silence reigned again.

Just then a second knock sounded on the door of our cabin, and Olaf Olsen entered.

"Captain," said Olsen. "I love your daughter."

Father clutched the table and staggered to his feet.

"There is no need for you to speak, sir," said Olsen hurriedly. "I know full well that I have committed what constitutes an unpardonable breach

of etiquette upon the high seas. It is not for the likes of me, a common sailor, to cast eyes of affection upon my Captain, that is, upon the *daughter* of my Captain," he laughed nervously, "yet the dictates of my heart are not subject to the dictates of my heart because my love is stronger than my sense of duty and therefore, sir," he concluded, raising his voice, "I have come to say farewell!" And he breathed a sigh of relief.

"Farewell?" echoed Father.

Olsen nodded, and bowed to one or two friends, and rocked on his toes.

"Farewell," prompted Father again.

"What? Oh, yes, farewell," continued Olsen, recollecting himself suddenly. "I have considered the matter deeply, sir, and my course is clear. You are a common sailor, and I the Captain's daughter. I only hope that as the years roll by you will think of one who loved beyond his rank but loved you well. Thank you. *Next!"* he called over his shoulder, as he hurried toward the rail. There was a single splash. Instantly Vulgar entered the cabin.

"Captain," he began frankly. "I love your daughter."

"Do you mind if I don't get up this time?" asked Father politely.

"There is no need for you to speak, sir," continued Vulgar in a high monotone. "I know full well that I have committed what constitutes an unpardonable breach of etiquette upon the high seas. Uh . . . It is not . . . it is not . . ." and his voice trailed, and ceased.

"It is not *for,*" whispered a voice outside the door.

"It is not *for,*" repeated Vulgar, mopping his brow nervously.

"It is not for the likes," urged the voice.

"For the likes," said Vulgar, while Father drummed his fingers impatiently upon the table, and someone outside snickered audibly.

"It is not for the likes of me—" prompted another voice.

"Just a minute," interrupted Father. "How many more of you are out there?"

"All the rest of the crew," replied Vulgar.

"Perhaps it would save time," suggested Father, "if we had them all at once."

So Vulgar sounded a bo's'n's whistle, and the rest of the crew stamped into the cabin and took their places beside him, shifting awkwardly from one leg to another and trying to find something to

do with their hands. One or two blinked and grinned sheepishly at the lights.

"Where was I?" asked Vulgar.

"You had almost gotten to 'farewell,'" said Father.

"Farewell," repeated the crew, more or less in unison. "We have considered the matter deeply, and our courses are clear. We only hope, June, that as the years roll by you will think of those who loved beyond their rank but loved you well," and the entire crew turned as one, blushing and shoving one another in their confusion, and crowded through the narrow exit and hurried to the rail. There was a single tremendous splash, and then silence.

And just then there came another timid knock upon the door, and Clarence the Cabin Boy entered.

"Well, did you come to say farewell, too?" asked Father wearily.

"No, sir," said Clarence simply.

"Do you mean to say that you are not leaving the ship?"

"On the contrary," said Clarence, "I was just wondering if you might not be needing a good first mate . . ."

"By God, sir," cried Father, leaping to his feet purple with rage, "you have insulted my daughter!" And without hesitation he seized the luckless Cabin Boy by the seat of the pants and rushed toward the rail. There was a distant splash, and then Father returned to the cabin dusting his hands. He shook his head at me sadly.

"Well, June," he sighed. "I guess you've grown up all right."

Far above us the wind whistled through the rigging of the deserted *City of Lowell.*

Chapter X

Finale

Chapter X

It is with a heavy heart that I enter at last upon what both Father and I realized at the time must be the final chapter of my adventures.

Day by day our sails were flapping listlessly in the breeze, and the empty decks of the *Louisa M. Alcott* resounded to the steady pace of Father's feet. Old Britches sat alone on the after hatch, sucking his pipe and staring moodily out to sea. The steering wheel turned this way and that, neglected and forgotten. We lay idly off the coast of Australia, with no destination for us to head to, no more room for oakum in our hold. Our voyage was over. Our crew had left us. And I had grown up.

"June," said Father sadly, "I'm afraid our time has come."

I nodded my head. It was plain that the dreaded climax was at hand; Father, like the stout-hearted old seaman that he was, did not hesitate to look the future in the face.

"Whenever you say the word, girl," he said to me bravely, "I'll go down in the hold and start the fatal fire that will destroy our ship."

Old Britches said nothing. Courageous old soul, well he knew that he was destined to perish in those cruel flames, in a desperate attempt to save my life. There is a curious fatalism that clings to sailorfolk in their hours of need.

"The lifeboat is packed with grub," continued Father, "the photographers have been notified, and I have your pencils and papers handy. As soon as you want to start the final swim for safety, I'll strike the match."

"Father," I said thoughtfully, "I've been wondering if it might be such a good idea to burn the *Mrs. Edward E. Gann,* after all. When you come right down to it, there's no real need of setting it on fire. There *are* other ways of ending a sea-story, you know."

"I never heard of any," pouted Father.

"We might present the ship to the Deep Sea Room of the Australian Museum of Natural History," I suggested cannily. "Perhaps it would come in handy to use as evidence later, in case any of the critics doubt our story."

"What critic is going to doubt our story?" de-

manded Father, rolling up his sleeves and glaring around him belligerently.

"I don't say they *will* doubt our story," I calmed him. "I'm just saying in case they *might*. You can't tell when you might want to refer to it again, you know."

"Well, if you want to present her to the Museum, June, girl," said Father regretfully, "we'll do it. But I admit I was kind of looking forward to seeing her burn," he added, more to himself. "I bet she'd of made as purty a blaze as any of them!"

"How are we going to get her to the Museum?" I asked suddenly.

"Ho, you jest leave that to me," said old Britches. "I ain't a-gonna desert the old *Clara H. Bow,* not while I got a breath in me. I'll stick by her to the last!"[1]

And so it was arranged.

The gay scene of my departure was in marked contrast to the heavy heart with which I bade fare-

[1] Poor, loyal old Britches! How true his words were none of us realized then! I have since learned that in his sentimental attachment for his ship he attempted to preserve her for posterity by blowing a bottle around her, such as he had seen the sailors make; and it was not until he had completed his work that he discovered by some fatal miscalculation he had included himself in his own bottle. The whole exhibit now rests on a dusty shelf in the Australian Museum, where old Britches may be discerned faintly through the glass, still buzzing like a fly about the rigging.

well to the *Isabel M. Paterson.* Inasmuch as it was a calm day, a considerable crowd of pleasure boats and round-the-world cruisers had gathered off Australia to witness the start of my swim. Flags were flying, a band was playing maritime airs, and the Mayor of Sydney arrived in his special speed-boat with a message for me to deliver to the Mayor of New York. Father had filled the lifeboat with chocolate bars and coffee, enough to sustain us on our long journey, and now he sat in the stern with oars poised, ready to start.

As I appeared on deck at last, covered from head to foot with grease and wrapped in a large American flag, a mighty cheer went up from the assembled multitude, and whistles sounded, and tugs blew their sirens, and the U.S.S. *Oregon* which was standing nearby sent off a salvo of seven guns. Meantime the newspapermen pressed forward, and a battery of cameras was turned upon me, and everyone shouted: "Smile, June!" and "Will you look this way just a minute if you please, thank you!" and suddenly there was a bustle in the crowd, and a movietone machine was wheeled up before me, and the camera-man asked me to say a few words to my friends on both continents. So I said that on the start of my eventful swim I merely wanted to say

that I wanted to thank all the kind friends who had been so kind to me in Australia, and I wanted to say that Australia was certainly a wonderful country and the South Seas were fine but that it was good to be getting back to the United States again, and in conclusion I just wanted to thank them all again.

"Just a minute boys!" I shouted, as the cameramen prepared to fold up their tripods, "Just one minute, *if* you *please!*" And then I darted back among the crowd, and reappeared a moment later dragging old Britches by the hand, who shuffled forward blushing and nodding to the crowd. "Boys, this is old Britches," I shouted, "the very best friend I had on the ship, and I just want to say that I owe everything to him." So the crowd cheered old Britches, and called for a speech, and he mumbled something about the time he once licked Hoover, and how he looked forward to retiring to a farm some day like Marion Talley and raising chickens, and that he wished me all success in my swim. And then the photographers made us pose shaking hands together, and then bidding each other farewell, while Britches put his hand on my head and I covered my eyes with a handkerchief, and finally they got a picture of both of us

embracing just as I climbed over the rail for the last time.

"Farewell, old Britches," I called. "Farewell, old ship! Farewell, old South Seas! Farewell, everybody! Farewell, farewell!"

With a graceful dive I cleaved the water of the harbor and emerged beside Father's lifeboat, while the judge in a nearby launch pressed his stop-watch, and the crowd broke into another frantic spasm of cheering.

"All ready?" asked Father, folding up his copy of the *New Bedford Argus* and putting away his glasses.

"All ready," I shouted, waving my hand. "Farewell!"

And amid a shower of native wreaths, and confetti, and good wishes, and pandemonium from the surrounding shipping, at exactly 3:45 p.m. on May 2nd, 1929, I abandoned the *Alice F. MacDougall* and began the first lap of my record-breaking swim home.

May 5, 1929—Crossing the Pacific.

It has been three days now since I left Australia, and as I pen these lines I am swimming along fairly comfortably. The water has grown slightly colder

as I have headed north, but the difference has not slowed up my speed materially. I still average about fifty words to the minute, a pace which I can sustain all day long.

Father is keeping fairly close to me in the lifeboat, in order to take the pages of my autobiography as I finish them, and hand me fresh sheets of white paper. He reads them over for proof and spelling, a feat that would be rather difficult for me swimming along here in the water. He also keeps my pencils sharp.

The most annoying feature of my swim so far is two baby sea-lions whom I discovered clinging to my flesh shortly after I had left Australia, and who have refused to let go their hold. I wouldn't mind their *clinging* to me so much, if they only would stop snatching at the pages of my diary as I write. Their constant mewing takes my mind from my work.

Another handicap is the anchor of the *Laura H. Crewes*, which I am carrying along as evidence of my adventures. Already those days seem very far behind me.

May 8, 1929—Somewhere in the Pacific.

I have been swimming along easily lately, catching up with my autobiography; and I am already

up to Chapter Four, which is the description of how I captured a baby waterspout. I am not quite sure whether it would really be possible to keep a baby waterspout on a ship as I describe; but at least I am pretty sure no one can prove that it *isn't.*

While Father was sharpening my pencils just now, I asked him if he could suggest a title for my autobiography. He suggested that I use Franklin P. Adams' title "Salt Water Taffy," and I decided that I would write to New York and ask Mr. Adams if he had any objection.[1]

We are now nearing the Panama Canal, and in a very short time I shall be in the Atlantic Ocean and on the home stretch at last.

May 10, 1929—The Panama Canal.

I must say I have never been so put out in all my life, and I shall certainly speak to the Government about this when I reach New York.

My first intimation of trouble was when I entered the Panama Canal, and discovered a crowd of reporters and camera-men poised about the *Pacific* end of the Culebra Cut. I had a vague idea that news of my swim might have leaked out, and they

[1] "No objection. Au contraire." *Letter from F. P. A. to the author.*

had come down from New York to meet me; but this theory was dispelled as I swam alongside, and a very rude attendant ordered me back.

"Look out," he shouted gruffly. "Don't get in the way. Richard Halliburton has been swimming through this canal for the past couple of months, and he ought to be along almost any day now."

It seems that Mr. Halliburton paid the Government $.39, and as a result he has obtained exclusive swimming privileges in the Canal until his book is published. This means that I shall have to go around by way of Cape Horn, which will delay me several days or possibly a week.

May 17, 1929—Rounding Cape Horn.

It certainly is cold down here around the ice-floes. Nothing but ice, ice, ice. You'd never think it was the middle of May.

I want to take this opportunity to speak about the splendid spirit of our expedition. Everybody is as nice as can be to everybody else, and the whole thing is just like one big happy family. Father is working very hard, and so am I, and in fact we *both* are working hard, and helping each other with our work, and it certainly shows that you have got to

"FAREWELL, MY OWN!"

It is the bitter moment of parting. Already the entire love-sick crew has leapt over the side in despair; and now for the last time poor June rests in the arms of her lover Hansom in a final embrace, ere the grim sea claim its own and she must swim back to the deserted ship alone. Would fate had been kinder! or the discipline of those who go down to the sea in ships a little less stern! "Farewell, June," sighs Hansom as he sinks beneath the surface. "I drown of a broken heart!"

Courtesy Brown Bros.

"Farewell, My Own!"

Courtesy French Line

Home At Last!

HOME AT LAST!

And now the long voyage is over, the adventures in the South Seas already belong to the past; and little June Triplett, her famous swim completed, prepares to mount the ladder of the *Ile de France* and meet the welcoming applause of the reporters. Yet even as her foot rests on the bottom rung she pauses for a moment, and lets her eyes wander back toward the sea she is quitting forever. Will the ocean keep its secret?

be on an expedition like this around the South Pole to find out what good-fellowship really is. The whole thing is just like a lark.

I have just completed the seventh chapter of my autobiography, in which I described a Strip Poker game in the fo'c'stle. Father rowed up alongside me as I wrote, and gave me a number of very valuable hints and technical poker terms which I am including in my book. It is growing harder and harder every day to recall those happy moments on the *Ella W. Wilcox.* They seem like a story to me now.

Sometimes I almost wonder if I have ever been at sea.

May 21, 1929—Off Brazil, South America.

For the past two days we have been lost in a heavy fog off South America, which has made the job of keeping up my diary extremely difficult. I have to hold my paper in one hand and a lighted lantern in the other, while paddling with my two feet, in order to see the diary at all. The actual work of writing I have had to leave to Father. Inasmuch as Father has to keep both *his* hands on the oars, he doesn't find it very easy either.

If this fog doesn't lift pretty soon, I shall have to shatter all literary precedent and get somebody in New York to write my autobiography for me.

For some time we have been followed by a school of playful dolphins. These funloving fish persist in diving down and suddenly coming up snout-first directly underneath me, which invariably causes me to give a little squeal and hop forward, and then look rather red and embarrassed. In addition to these waggish dolphins, a large man-eating shark recently swam alongside me, its hungry jaws extended; and Father, who has a keen nose for publicity, stood up in the boat and waved his arms to me excitedly.

"Bite it, June," he called. "That's news!"

Unfortunately the shark swam away in terror before I was able to carry out his suggestion; and I lost all track of it in the thick fog that still surrounds us.

Later: The mystery of the fog was finally cleared up just now, when I discovered to my chagrin that for the past two days I have been swimming under water. Father took this as a great joke, but I was

a little put out, inasmuch as it got the pages of my autobiography all wet.

May 26, 1929—The Gulf Stream, Florida.

As I write these words, I am heading north in the Gulf Stream, ducking bottles.

Ever since I passed Havana these bottles have been getting thicker and thicker, and the danger from broken glass is increasing every minute. This morning, for example, I punctured the left bladder of my water-wings, and only great presence of mind and the right bladder saved me from drowning.

I have no idea what causes all these bottles off the coast of Florida, because of course Florida voted strongly for Mr. Hoover in the last election; but the fact remains that they have made swimming in the Gulf Stream well nigh impossible. I recently emptied the contents of several of these floating bottles down my mouth, in an effort to see whether there might be a note inside one of them; as a result I have been swimming in circles, and losing all sense of direction.

"I think you're going out to sea," Father called to me at last. "Isn't Florida in the other direction?"

"That's what I'm going out to sea," I replied, just for a joke, but Father thought it was so good that he made me write it here in my autobiography.

I have finished eight chapters of this autobiography so far, and Father has just started north in the rowboat to rush them to the printers. He expects to return and pick me up off the Virginia coast some time tomorrow.

May 28, 1929—Off Atlantic City.

Father returned yesterday with the galley-proofs of the first eight chapters of my book, and I have been reading them through for proof corrections while writing the ninth chapter of my autobiography and, of course, swimming. He says the publishers are hurrying with the book in order to have it ready upon my arrival in New York tomorrow.

As soon as I finished the last chapter, Father started back with it for New York. He is planning to meet me down the Harbor tomorrow.

May 29, 1929. 6:57 a.m.—Quarantine.

As I swam up the Bay and the magnificent skyline of Gotham hove into view, I paused and stared aghast at what I feel is beyond doubt the

Ninth Wonder of the World. (The Eighth is my book.) Surely there is no spectacle which can surpass the sight of this modern Babylon towering out of the mists, its spires scraping the sky and its flags flying o'erhead. There is nothing in the South Seas to compare with it.

Never shall I forget the thrill which shot through me as I forded the Narrows and saw the Statue of Liberty again! I had been under the impression that the Methodist Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals had removed this symbol long since, as being old-fashioned and tending to incite dangerous ideals; and I was indeed glad to find her still standing as ever, with her back turned to America and her upraised torch enlightening the rest of the world.

The doctor has just come up alongside me for his inspection.

May 29. 10:45 a.m.—New York Harbor.

I have just completed the doctor's inspection, and am now swimming across the harbor to be inspected in turn by the Customs Men.

Father met me in his rowboat just this side of Governor's Island, beside himself with excitement at the magnificent reception which he says is being

prepared for me. New York is planning one of her famous welcomes. Banks are being closed, schools suspended, and business houses are shutting down to allow their employees to view the huge parade up Broadway, as I pass through a lane of ticker tape and torn-up telephone books, in a veritable May snowstorm, to be welcomed on the City Hall steps and presented with the keys of the city by the Mayor. Office windows along the line of march are already crowded with eager faces, and manufacturers are making a fortune selling celluloid "Triplett Buttons" and little imitation models of the *Anna Q. Nilsson.* After a round of luncheons, speeches, presentations and the like, the day will terminate at last in a tremendous dinner aboard the *Ile de France* for five hundred editors, writers and critics, who will gather together to welcome me back after my record-breaking swim.

It all sounds too good to be true, and as soon as I have finished my Customs Inspection I shall hurry ashore to meet the members of the Mayor's Committee, headed by Mr. Whalen.

May 29. 2:56 p.m.—Customs Pier.

I am now waiting for my Customs Inspection.

May 29. 6:16 p.m.—Customs Pier.

I am still waiting for my Customs Inspection.

May 29. 9:14 p.m.

I am still waiting for my Customs Inspection; and I must say I am beginning to get a little discouraged. Father has rowed back and forth five or six times, and he reports that the spectators are beginning to grow restless along the line of march, and one or two have gone home to get a bite to eat. The parade was scheduled for ten o'clock this morning, and it is now nearly twelve hours overdue. Fortunately the Mayor has not arrived yet, either.

The difficulty seems to be that I have no baggage with me, and am not wearing any clothing at all, and as a result the Customs Men have nothing to throw around the pier and rumple up and tear to pieces in their search for smuggled liquor. This is the first time such a situation has arisen, and the Customs Men seem to be baffled. In the meantime I am just floating around down here in the harbor among the other heads of cabbage, treading water and waiting for them to make up their minds.

Father has just rowed back across the Harbor for the sixth time to see what he can do.

May 29. 9:27 p.m.—The Ile de France.

Home at last!

In the nick of time Father returned to the Customs Pier with a copy of "Salt Water Taffy," fresh from the presses and with the ink still wet upon its pages; and while the Customs Men seized it eagerly and tore it to pieces in their search for evidence, we slipped away in the darkness and hurried across the harbor to the *Ile de France,* where the welcoming critics and friends are awaiting me now as I pen these final words.

Yet even as I leave the water, for the first time in my life, and set foot on the rope ladder which will bear me over the side of the *Ile de France* and back to civilization again, I steal a quick look at the newly finished autobiography here in my hand, and therein for the first time I read the almost incredible account of my own life at sea. And as I read on, and these unbelievable adventures unfold before my eyes, the whole autobiography becomes true once more, and under the spell of my magic words I feel as though I, too, had actually played strip poker in the fo'c'stle with old Britches, and Knut Hansom, and Horrible Olaf, and Vulgar, and Clarence the Cabin-Boy, and witnessed the Dance of the Virgins on No-Men Atoll, and cap-

tured a waterspout, and sailed the South Seas just as I have described. I shut the book. My eyes fill with implusive tears.

What happy times we must have had, after all, on dear old what's-her-name!

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